

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION

AND THE TESTIMONIES OF IGNATIUS AND JUSTIN
MARTYR ON THAT SUBJECT :

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS

TO THE REV. MR. NISBETT ;

OCCASIONED BY HIS

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC,

AND HIS OBSERVATIONS ON DR. PRIESTLEY.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

REMARKS

On Mr. WAKEFIELD'S OPINION concerning Matt. xxvii. 5.

By *JOHN POPE,*

*Tutor in the Belles Lettres and Classical Literature, at the
New College, Hackney.*

Quis---qui paululum modo bonorum consuetudinem nosset,
litteras ad se ab amico missas, offensione aliquâ interpositâ, in
medium protulit, palamque recitavit? CICERO.

Nos ad utrumque juxta parati sumus, ut vel rationem redda-
mus, si quid rectè monuimus, vel ingenuè confiteamur errorem,
sicubi lapsi deprehendimur. Homines sumus, et humani nihil
alienum à nobis esse ducimus. ERASMUS.

LONDON :

Printed for J. JOHNSON, N^o. 72, St. Paul's Church-Yard,
and B. WHITE and SONS, Fleet-Street.

MDCCXCII.

OBSERVATIONS

MARSHALL'S DONORSHIP

45

6 12.

210



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE reader will easily perceive that the greatest part of the following letters has been long since printed: unexpected delays alone are the cause of their late appearance. Such as they are, the author now presents them to the candid world. By their suffrages he is willing to be judged: and to their advantage he wishes to dedicate the best of his endeavours. His motto, and he hopes, his principle is, *magna est veritas*. If the ideas contained in these letters be agreeable to this, he makes no doubt but—*prævalēbit*. On any other terms, he would not attempt to court their favour: but in *every case*, he earnestly solicits their *candour*.

NEW COLLEGE, HACKNEY,
January 14, 1792.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
<i>Prefatory Apology</i> - -	I.
 LETTER	
I. <i>Preliminary Observations on the Controversy</i> - -	27.
II. <i>On Dr. Priestley's Arguments, and Mr. Nisbett's Manner of considering them</i> - -	43.
III. <i>Miscellaneous Observations on the Ebionite Gospel, and the Miraculous Conception</i> - -	88.
IV. <i>Remarks on Mr. Nisbett's Arguments in Favour of the Miraculous Conception</i> - -	157.
V. <i>On the Genuineness of Ignatius's Epistles</i> - -	216.
VI. <i>On the Testimony of Justin Martyr</i>	271.
VII. <i>On Interpolations in the present Copies of the New Testament</i>	308.

APPENDIX.

<i>Observations on Mr. Wakefield's Criticisms on Matt. xxvii. 5.</i> - -	357.
--	------

PREFATORY APOLOGY.

THOUGH I do not wish to prepossess the reader, by undue arts, in favour of the cause in which I am engaged, yet I hope it will not be deemed either improper, or inexpedient, to lay before him a just statement of those circumstances, which have called forth, against my inclination, the following pages.

A few months since I met with Mr. Nisbett's Treatise on the Miraculous Conception, in reply to Dr. Priestley's observations on the same subject, in the Theological Repository. I read it through with a strong prepossession in favour both of the author and his cause. Of the former, on account of his

mildness and candour; and of the latter, because I was previously of the same opinion, and thought this opinion well supported by Mr. Nisbett's arguments.

I must confess, I had not, at that time, attended properly to the arguments which Dr. Priestley had advanced. Indeed, I regarded the subject as indisputable, founded on the concurring testimony of two evangelists, and affected with no difficulties, arising either from the fact itself, or the circumstances with which it was accompanied.

This, I may be told, affords no presumption either of the depth of my penetration, or the extensiveness of my inquiry. I acknowledge the charge; and can make no other excuse for myself, but that it did not fall in my way to engage in the discussion of this part of the gospel-system.

Mr. Nisbett, however, awakened my attention. As I am seldom contented with a single reading of an author whose ideas accord with my own (a frailty, I fear, too common among men) I took up, in an evil hour,

hour, perhaps, Mr. Nisbett's pamphlet a second time; and, by a singular perversion of the common order of reading, began with the appendix.

Finding, in this, the evidence of Ignatius so plain and express in favour of a doctrine concerning which Mr. Nisbett informed me, that Dr. Priestley had led the world to imagine the Father was totally silent, I began to conclude that what had been told me, by one of the clergy, was not totally unfounded;—that *Dr. Priestley was one of the most unfair among authors.*

But, as I had been accustomed to think better of Dr. Priestley, I apprehended it would not be labour lost both to examine the passage quoted from Ignatius, and to look into the writings of Dr. Priestley himself, that it might be known whether he was so unfair a writer as he had been represented.

I consulted the passage. I found it to be a known and acknowledged forgery; and, as a friend of truth, I told Mr. Nisbett, in

a private letter, written from warm and immediate impulse, that it was so.

Most persons of open hearts would say, *and where is the harm in all this?* I myself thought of none; and, as I gave Mr. Nisbett my name and address, I formed no expectation, but that he would either comply with the request contained in it, which was to acknowledge his error by the channel of the Reviews (a method not unfrequently practised, and which would reflect no dishonour upon any author) or assign to me, in the same private manner, his reasons why he did not coincide with me in ideas.

The letter, I acknowledge, was not written with that guarded accuracy, either as to sentiment or expression, which should render it fit to appear before the public. As to sentiment, indeed, I do not know of any thing materially wrong in it, except a censure passed upon those of the clergy of the church of England, who have acted unhandfomely in their controversies with Dr. Priestley; but which, by being expressed in
general

general terms, might be made to extend, contrary to fact, and to my own intention, to the whole body of the clergy, indiscriminately. With respect to the latter, the carelessness of style in the following pages will naturally lead to the conclusion that a hasty letter must be incorrect indeed.

I believe, therefore, that I shall be easily credited, when I declare, upon my honest word, I had not the smallest suspicion, that this letter would be brought before the public.

But in this I was disappointed. As soon as Mr. Nisbett had received it, a first rough draught as it was, full of blots and erasures, and carrying upon its face the plainest marks of a mere hasty effusion; he, *imagining that I had preserved no copy, immediately, without asking my consent*, determined to print it. Of this, to do him justice, he gave me information.

I received this on January the twenty-fourth, in a letter of his dated the twentieth.

To prevent such a composition from appearing before the public, I wrote to him, (January 26th) *within* TWO DAYS *after receiving his letter*, a reply, strongly urging the impropriety of such a publication, and acquainting him that the letter in question was intended for his *private use* only; — but at the same time telling him, that if, *contrary to my wishes*, he was, nevertheless, determined upon printing it; I had then *sent him a corrected copy*, in which several expressions were altered, and improper asperities duly softened.

To this I received a reply, dated the thirty-first, in which Mr. Nisbett informed me, that he could not publish this corrected copy; *the other being printed off, together with the greatest part of his answer to it.*

I beg the reader to observe that only *fifteen days* had elapsed from the time of sending my first letter (which was dated the eleventh of January) receiving Mr. Nisbett's reply, and writing mine in return; and that his own letter, just mentioned, is of no later date

date than the thirty-first of the same month. And yet in his pamphlet, the publication of which he announced to me *so late as the twenty-first of February*, he says* (speaking of my *first letter only*) "this is the WHOLE of the correspondence which I have had with Mr. Pope.†"

How fair and ingenuous this is, let Mr. Nisbett himself and the public determine.

Mr. Nisbett, however, attempts to justify the measure he has taken, on the principle that

* p. 16.

• Mr. Nisbett, indeed, acknowledges, in a note to p. 49, the receipt of a second letter from me, expressing my disapprobation of his publishing the former, and inclosing (if he was determined, contrary to my wishes, to print the letter) a corrected copy; but he says, *it arrived too late*. Would not any one think, from this account, that I had postponed writing to him for a considerable time? But as, by his own letter, it appears that he had not begun to print on the twentieth of January; and his receipt of my second letter was on the thirty-first; as both he and myself reside in country places, remote from a post town, so that the letters addressed to me (and I suppose those to him) frequently lie several days before they come to hand; and the

that, if the letter in question had been written to him *merely to correct a mistake* (and this I most seriously declare was the *only* design of it) *without any mixture of severe censure, he would not have put himself to the expense of this mode of vindication.* “But (says he) I “could not suppose myself bound to privacy, “when he took such liberties with my character, and that of my order, as he has “done.”

I cannot, however, help thinking, that if Mr. Nisbett had not been much affected with that peculiar irritability which has, *for about twelve months past*, been somewhat *epidemical*

the distance between us is not less, I believe, than two hundred and fifty miles; eleven days are, methinks, no long time to wait, in a matter which required no despatch, and from the delay of which he could have nothing to fear either as to interest or reputation. That in this short time he should not only have written, but printed *forty-eight pages*, shows such a degree of precipitation, as is hardly consistent with his declaration, that my letter arrived too late to *gratify his inclination of complying with my request.*

among

among the English clergy, his own good sense would have suggested to him, that, in the case of any fault, the reprehension due to it should bear an analogy to the fault itself, — and the circumstances accompanying it; that if the liberties of which he complains, had been publicly taken, public remark would have been necessary; but, as they were private only, and of such a sort as involved no disagreeable consequences to him, where was the propriety of bringing before the world, that which was, virtually, nothing more than a private room conversation? Would Mr. Nisbett expose a man in the public newspapers for hasty words dropped in his presence only? I must confess I do not see any thing in this conduct which deserves to be called either fair, or gentleman-like.

If he had at all remonstrated with me, before he had formed this determination, he should have received, either reasons for my continuing in the same sentiments, or a candid acknowledgment of my mistakes. For I have not chosen the motto from Erasmus
merely

merely as a beautiful passage, but as the very principle by which, I hope, I have hitherto conducted, and shall continue, by the assistance of the best of beings, to conduct myself in all my inquiries.

Waving, however, all protestations of this sort, I am sincerely sorry to be thus obliged, in consequence of Mr. Nisbett's having refused to do me justice, to take this method of doing justice to myself, and to be compelled to exhibit a series of particulars which will bear harder upon Mr. Nisbett's credit, as a fair reasoner, than the very instance with which he is so much offended.

Previous to this, let me beg leave to lay before the reader the corrected letter, that a judgment may be formed, whether, if it had been published as it ought to have been, Mr. Nisbett would have found reason for the appeal, with which he has unnecessarily troubled the public. The letter, sent to him, is as follows.

STAND,

STAND, JAN. 26, 1791.

S I R,

Though I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you any farther than by the perusal of two pieces which you have lately published, from one of which you have justly acquired the character of a fair and candid writer ; yet I cannot help regarding it as my duty (engaged as I am in the same important work with you of inquiring after, and disseminating the true principles of the gospel) to lay before you, with sincerity and plainness, my sentiments with respect to some parts of your treatise on the Miraculous Conception.

I do not mean to controvert the arguments used by you, in the body of your pamphlet, against Dr. Priestley's opinion. Of the weight of these the world must judge. But I cannot suppress my astonishment, that you should descend to the unworthy methods of misrepre-

misrepresentation and false quotation, against a gentleman whose openness deserves much better treatment.

To keep you no longer in suspense; you must be sensible, that the passages you cite from Dr. Lardner, as to the authenticity of Ignatius's epistles, are applied by him to the smaller epistles only; or those, which in my copy of the *Patres Apostolici* (which is Ruffel's edition in two volumes octavo) are called *Epistolæ genuinae*. From these alone should your citations have been made. But, instead of doing this, the whole passage which you have exhibited, as throwing a confutation in Dr. Priestley's face, is taken from one of the *interpolated* epistles, the authority of which is universally disclaimed.

Of this you could not possibly be ignorant; since you not only cite a particular edition of the works of Ignatius*, but you even profess to *translate a passage from this*

* That is, *Le Clerc's* edition of the *Patres Apostolici*.

edition.

edition.* Now, not only is the title of *Epistola interpolata*, prefixed to these epistles;--- as well as the running title at the head of every page, plainly, *S. Ignatii Interp. Epist.*---but also Cotelerius, in the very first note to the epistle *ad Ephesios* (from which you have made your citation) both *declares* in the strongest manner all these epistles to be *interpolated and corrupted*, and gives no slight hints that they are not of earlier date than the fifth or sixth century, How far, therefore, it is consistent with fairness to produce such as *genuine authority*, I will leave to your own judgment.

I do not deny that the corresponding passage, in the *genuine* epistle *ad Ephesios*, expresses the same sentiment. But there is this difference between the two epistles; that the *genuine* epistle expresses only the *private opinion* of Ignatius; whereas the interpolated epistle, from the very nature of the clauses in it, affords a direct attestation to the *genuineness*

* Nisbett on the Mirac. Concep. p. 105.

of that part of scripture, which contains the account of the miraculous conception. The former, therefore, would be no decisive evidence at all in the case; the latter is as clear and positive as can well be imagined*.

For the question is not (as you seem to lead your readers to apprehend) whether the miraculous conception was believed by ANY at an early period of christianity; for that is not doubted;---but whether (to use Dr. Priestley's words†) "*the disbelief of it was more general, and probably universal in an earlier age,*" than that to which the authority in favour of the doctrine can be justly supposed to extend.

That you may not suspect me of injustice in my assertions, I shall here add the original of the passage which you have quoted, together with that which ought to have been produced.

* These two last paragraphs, excepting the general sentiment of the latter, *very slightly expressed*, are not in the first uncorrected letter, which Mr. Nisbett published.

† Hist. of Earl. Opin. vol. IV. p. 71.

In

In the interpolated Epistle to the Ephesians, in Ruffel's* edition, the passage which you have produced as *genuine*, is found in the following words, the interpolations being, in the printed copy, included in brackets, as I shall give them to you.†

[Ο τρυφῶν τῇ ἰσχύϊ Χριστῷ, τοῖς μὲν ἀπίστοις σκάνδαλον ἐστὶ τοῖς δὲ πιστοῖς] σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰωνίῃ. Πᾶς σοφῶς; πᾶς συζητήτης; πᾶς καυχῆσις τῶν λεγομένων [δυνατῶν]; Ο γὰρ [τῷ Θεῷ υἱῷ, ὁ πρὸ αἰώνων γεννηθεὶς, καὶ τὰ πάντα γνῶμη τῷ Πατρὶ συνησάμενος, υἱῷ] ἐκυφορήθη [ἐκ] Μαρίας, καὶ οἰκονομίαν θέν, ἐκ σπέρματος μὲν Δαβὶδ, [διὰ] πνεύματος δὲ ἁγίου. [Ἰδὲ γὰρ, φησὶν, ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ληφείη, καὶ τεξείη υἱόν, καὶ κληθήσεται Ἐμμανουὴλ. Οὐδὲ] ἐγεννήθη, &c.

* Vol. II. *Interpolat. Epist. ad Ephes.* § IH.

† In Le Clerc's edition of Cotelerius's *Patres Apostol.* (vol. II. p. 53.) there are no brackets; but the distinction between the genuine and interpolated epistles of Ignatius is accurately marked by the running title; that of the latter being *S. Ignat. INTERP. Epist.* so that, unless the reader were very careless indeed, it would be impossible for him not to perceive the difference between the spurious and the genuine epistles.

The genuine passage is the following.*

Περὶ ἡμᾶς τὸ εὖρον πνεῦμα τῆς σαυρῆς, ὃ εἶναι σκανδαλὸν τοῖς ἀπίστοις, ἡμῖν δὲ σωτηρία καὶ ζωὴ αἰωνίᾳ. Πᾶς σοφῶς; πᾶς συζητήτης; πᾶς καυχῆσις τῶν λεγομένων συνελθόντων; Ὁ γὰρ θεὸς ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστὸς ἐκυφορήθη ὑπὸ Μαρίας, καὶ οἰκονομίαν θεῶς, ἐκ σπέρματος μὲν Δαβὶδ, πνεύματος δὲ ἁγίου ὅς ἐγεννήθη, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη, ἵνα τὸ παθεῖ τοῦ ὕδατος καθάρσις.†

This

* Vol. II. p. 110. § IH.

† It may not be improper to present the reader with versions of these passages: the first shall be Mr. Nisbett's (*Mirac. Concep.* p. 106.) and the second I am accountable for; Wake's (Which Mr. Nisbett has adopted in his appeal, p. 31, 32.) appearing to me very erroneous. I have inclosed in brackets the interpolated clauses in the same manner as in the original.

1. " [The cross of Christ is to unbelievers a stumbling block; but to the faithful,] salvation and eternal life. Where is the wise man? Where is the disputer? where is the boasting of those who are called [mighty]? For [the Son of God, who was begotten before the worlds, and was appointed over all things in the counsel of the Father,] was conceived, according to the dispensation of God, in the womb of Mary, of the seed of David, by the Holy Ghost. [For behold, saith he, a virgin shall conceive in her womb,

This latter passage, indeed, as I have already said, expresses, equally with the former, Ignatius's opinion as being favourable to the miraculous conception; as does, more fully, one immediately following; in which the father tells the idle story of the devil (*τοῦ ἀρχοῦ τοῦ αἰῶνος τοῦ τῆς*) being ignorant of Mary's virginity, &c. But this by no means affords an argument that the account of the miraculous conception was found in the New Testament; which is the direct tendency of the interpolated passage.

"womb, and she shall bear a son, and he shall be called Emmanuel.]"

2. My spirit is one of the sweepings (or offscourings) of the cross; which is the cause of offence to unbelievers, but to us salvation and life eternal. Where is the wise man? where the disputer; where the boast of those who are called men of understanding? [For our God Jesus Christ was conceived by Mary, according to the dispensation of God, of the seed of David, but of the Holy Spirit; who was born and baptized, that by his suffering he might purify the water.] Or perhaps, that the water might purify him for his sufferings. *καὶ πᾶσι ὑμῖν ὑποκαταστήσει.* See *Bas. Ellips. Græc.* p. 328. note x.

But even in the supposed genuine passage there are two interpolations. Θεοῦ ἡμῶν I look upon as one, and καὶ οἰκονομῶν δὲ, ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ, πνευματικῶς δὲ ἀγίου the other. So that, in reality, this passage affords no countenance to the opinion of the miraculous conception. Indeed, the whole sentence is a mere forgery.*

As you have quoted Lardner in favour of the authenticity of Ignatius's smaller epistles, would it not have been proper to have added also his note? "Beausobre, though he favours the genuineness of the smaller epistles, suspects that even they have been interpolated." †

Above

* I have therefore included it in brackets for the sake of the English reader. There is, however, little necessity to remark such trifling interpolations, when it will appear, that the whole of the epistles are forgeries, or, at least, that the forgeries are more than the genuine text.

† It is only justice to acknowledge that Mr. Nisbett is not blameable in the least for this omission. The edition which he has, of 1734, had not this quotation

Above all I think you should have looked into Dr. Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol. I. book I. chap. i. where he treats of the apostolical fathers, and (p. 107, 108) assigns a sufficient reason for rejecting the authority of Ignatius's epistles.

"Salmasius, Blondel, and Daillé" (says he) "are decided that *all the epistles are spurious* : and Le Sueur, after having given "an account of the whole matter, says, that "the last of them, viz. Mr. Daillé, has *clearly* "proved, that the first, or *small collection* of "Ignatius's epistles was *forged about the be-* "ginning of the fourth century, or two hundred "years after the death of Ignatius ; and that "the second, or larger collection, was made "at the beginning of the sixth century."

This passage, I am of opinion, ought to have been examined, before you had pro-
 tion from Beaufobre. It is found in my copy of Lardner's works, vol. II. p. 69. (edit. 1788). If I had suspected that it was wanting in any edition, Mr. Nisbett should not have been troubled with the remark to which this note refers.

nounced on Dr. Priestley's *silence upon this head.**

Dr. Priestley's *History of Early Opinions* was published in 1786; and your remarks on the Miraculous Conception not before the last year. Are you perfectly vindicable in the examination of a periodical work only, and in neglecting one so important, and so much more studied?

I am sorry to say it; but the conduct of some of the clergy of the church of England, with respect to Dr. Priestley, has been, in many instances, highly unjust and illiberal.† Instead of fair discussion, and just argument, they have taken advantage of trifling inaccuracies.

* Nisbett. *ub. sup.* p. 101.

† I have already told the reader that, in the former letter, this sentence was expressed in *general terms*. But the very nature of the subject plainly shows that they were meant to be understood with many limitations. I offer, however, no plea in their favour, but hastiness of writing. In the present letter, the language is very different. Why did not Mr. Nisbett wait a few days for my corrections, and save himself and me the trouble of so much *personal controversy*?

racies,

racies, falsified his sentiments, and have had recourse to that most detestable of all engines, the *odium theologicum*.

These, most certainly, are not the methods which truth requires, or religion recommends. Would the clergy, would mankind in general, only reflect, that the design of God is to lead us, by daily improvement, to the perfection of which our nature is capable; and that this can be attained by no method, so infallibly, as by mutual communications of knowledge, in the most frank and unsuspicious manner; they would abandon all those artifices, which, by destroying literary confidence, throw the most effectual impediments in the way of science; and render it, (contrary to what it was intended to be,) an object of the most irksome labour, and of the most difficult acquisition.

Indeed, I am convinced, that it is the duty of us all, to detach ourselves from every prejudice which may warp our judgments, or lay an improper bias on our conduct, and, fearless of the consequences which

may resort to established systems, to embrace, as a real friend, every sincere examiner, let the name by which he is distinguished be ever so exceptionable in the ideas of ignorant and bigotted partisans.*

I am, SIR,

Your most humble servant,

JANUARY 26, 1791.

J. POPE.

* In this letter, the proposal to Mr. Nisbett, to acknowledge his mistake in the Reviews, is omitted, as he had declared his resolution to communicate his sentiments to the public, in the manner which has given occasion to the present publication.

There is also in the first copy a postscript, which refers to Mr. Nisbett's ready acquiescence in Travis's arguments to prove the authenticity of 1 John v. 7. and charges Mr. Travis with plagiarism and misrepresentation. This is omitted in the present copy, as having no relation to the principal subject. But, as Mr. Nisbett has published this, together with the rest of the other copy, I shall be obliged to take some notice of it, in the course of the following letters, in which I pledge myself to establish my charges against Mr. Travis in the fullest extent.

Having

Having thus given a fair statement of facts, I shall next turn my attention to Mr. Nisbett, only premising thus much, which the reader has a right to be informed of; that, the substance of the following letters, instead of being mere personal invective, with which Mr. Nisbett charges me,* shall be, as far as I am capable of it, fair argument, and just deduction. If these turn against Mr. Nisbett, the fault is not mine. Any thing which can merit the name of railing he shall not meet with from me. My only view in writing the very letter which has so much offended him, was the advancement of the interest of truth; and the same view shall guide my pen to the end of those which follow.

It will not, however, be either unjust or uncandid to make one general remark on his method of conducting the argument against Dr. Priestley: that Mr. Nisbett, in most of his animadversions, takes the doctor's *conclusions only*; the premises leading to these he omits; though it is not only essential in the art of reasoning, to overthrow the latter, in order

* Appeal, p. 58.

to show the absurdity of the former; but also a proposition, when exhibited naked and independent of the principles by which it is supported, may appear paradoxical, and even false, when, in reality, taken as it ought to be, in connection with its proofs, it may stand on the footing of demonstration itself. It is by a regard to this rule that real candour is distinguished from false and empty semblance. For, I think, it may be laid down as an infallible principle, to which every one, who is engaged in controversy, ought to turn his eyes, as to the polar star which should guide his motions, that the amiable quality of candour by no means consists in mildness and gentility of language, in empty compliments and flattering modes of expression, but in the open, undisguised display of all the arguments by which light may be thrown on the subjects which are considered, how much soever these arguments may bear hard upon the most favourite principles of the inquirer himself. This appears to me the only method by which truth, religion or science can possibly prevail.

LETTERS

LETTERS

TO MR. NISBETT, &c.

LETTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE CONTROVERSY.

SIR,

FROM a pamphlet which you have been so good as to send me, and in which I am honoured with particular notice, I find myself compelled, against my inclination, to appear in a controversy, which I would rather have left to those who are more capable of conducting it. Such, however, as my abilities are, I shall exert them in the best manner I am able, in the attempt to elucidate a subject which has excited general attention, and,

and, I am sorry to say, has given occasion to too much unchristian zeal.

With this, indeed, you, in some measure, charge me. You tell me,* that “I have censured, indiscriminately, the conduct of the clergy of the church of England, as most *unjust and scandalous* with respect to Dr. Priestley; and that you must, from the whole tenour of my letter to you, suppose that you are to be ranked among the number of those who deserve these epithets.”

Though, in reply to this, I might justly plead, that the idea you have formed of the tenour of my letter arises from a mistake of your own, in copying, by running two paragraphs into one, the words *I am sorry to say it, but the conduct of the clergy, &c.* not belonging. (as you will find both in my written letter, and in that which makes part of my prefatory apology) to the former sentence, nor, indeed, having any real connexion with it; — yet, I will wave this plea,

* Appeal to the Public, p. 17.

and

and content myself with assuring you, that I had no thought at all of you when I wrote the passage. And, with respect to the body of the clergy, though I disapprove of general and unlimited censures as much as you, yet, even these, if interpreted fairly, must necessarily be accompanied with such restrictions as arise from the nature of the subject, and cannot but be easily supplied by every one who is not inclined to make an improper use of incautious expressions.

When, therefore, I expressed myself concerning the conduct of the clergy in the terms with which you seem to be so much hurt, it might be easily understood that I meant those only, who had distinguished themselves by their illiberality and uncharitableness towards Dr. Priestley. If these made up the greatest number of his opponents, is it so surprising that general terms should be used? Do you think, Sir, that I could mean Dr. Newcome, the bishop of Waterford? Or, if you are sensible that none of the charge can justly fall upon yourself,

self, do you think I could mean you? With respect to Dr. Newcome, his conduct should be an example to all controversialists; and with respect to yourself, I acknowledge that I have no recollection of any severe expression against Dr. Priestley in either of your pamphlets.

But what shall we say of most others of your order? Are you so ignorant of their sentiments as not to know that he is regarded among them as little better than an infidel? And is not this idea industriously kept up and propagated in your order? Is not this the more inexcusable, as very few of your order have read his works, or know either his arguments or opinions? Conduct, guided by such bigotted principles, may fairly be pronounced *unjust*; and, if the ignorance from which it arises be not *scandalous*, the study of the most important branches of theology is no necessary part of the education or office of a clergyman.

Will you vindicate Mr. Venn; or can you say any thing in favour of Dr. Horsley,
Mr.

Mr. Madan, or Mr. Burn, who have been his most distinguished adversaries? Or will you vindicate that *political* bishop, so honourably mentioned in the *Rolliad*, who wittily and candidly makes Dr. Priestley a companion to Margaret Nicholson?

If with these instances before my eyes, my expressions exceeded the bounds of cool moderation, is it so surprising, or did they deserve the *public* reprehensions you have so liberally bestowed on them?

But neither these expressions, nor the observation containing them, would have appeared, if you had not been so very hasty in committing my letter to the press, as *not to afford me time to make one correction*. For you are compelled to acknowledge, that in the corrected copy (which was transmitted to you in a very short time after my receipt of the letter in which you announced your design of publication) I advert to the conduct of *some* of the clergy only. On what principle,

principle, then, can you justify that precipitance which prevents a correspondent from either correcting or explaining his sentiments, and brings, as its consequence, such a retraction as renders nugatory no small part of your pamphlet?

You also observe,* that, because the error on which I remark fell from "a clergyman of the church of England, it must be scrutinised with all the keenness of CRITICISM, &c."

That the clergy should be a little sore on some theological as well as political topics, which have been lately discussed, is not so wonderful. But that you should suppose, Sir, the mere circumstance of your being a clergyman to be, with me, a reason for advancing an argument, or making a severe remark, which I should otherwise have declined, is, I do assure you, judging much more unkindly and uncharitably of me, than I deserve. In my sentiments, as well as in

* Appeal, p. 50. &c.

my studies, I am of no party. I call myself a *protestant*; because I regard the church of Rome as a corruption of christianity. I call myself a *protestant dissenter*; because I look upon the establishment of the church of England as still a corruption, though more refined than that of Rome. And I engage in the office of the ministry among protestant dissenters, because they are the only set of christians who leave me, unfettered by creeds, articles, or confessions, to deduce, for myself, a system of belief and practice, from the pure records of the Old and New Testament.

In consistency with this, I can use, without fear, the helps of all instructors, of all parties and denominations. I can admire Du Pin the catholic, and Bingham the English episcopalian, and apply their writings to the purposes of christian edification; to which, indeed, all parties pretend, but none can fully attain, except those, who, refusing subjection to human

C

decisions,

decisions, regard the BIBLE alone as the religion of christians.

This, I hope, will convince you, that I am not chargeable with the *odium theologicum*, against you, or any of your brethren. With respect to them, I have made no observations which are not founded upon plain and obvious facts; and with regard to yourself, I acknowledge that, in almost every instance in which you have had occasion to speak of Dr. Priestley, you have used the most civil and polite language. If this were sufficient to constitute a candid disposition, I should suppose that no one had a better title to it than you. But something besides merely smooth expressions is necessary to this character. In this, I make no doubt, you will agree with me.

Before, however, I proceed farther upon this subject, give me leave to take notice of one particular observation of yours. In reply to the question, " why did you not, instead of " confining your attention to the Theological " Repository, examine the arguments brought
" by

“ by Dr. Priestley, in his *History of Early Opinions*,” you observe,

“ You have said that the *History of Early Opinions* was published in 1786, and you might have added, that his *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* was published some years before that, in which, it seems, that the “ subject of the miraculous conception is largely discussed ; but it is a remarkable circumstance that the periodical work, which you complain of me for quoting, instead of one so much more important, and more studied,” “ was likewise published in that same year ; and it might be presumed, it would have had all the advantages, which a long study of the subject could have given it.” *

I certainly did, Sir, express my wonder, that you had not, instead of replying to this periodical work, taken notice of the *History of Early Opinions* ; and I see no reason yet to change my sentiments. You plead, in-

* Appeal, p. 45.

deed, that, as the Theological Repository was subsequent to, though, as you tell me, published in the same year with the History of the Corruptions of Christianity, it might be presumed to have had all the advantages, which a long study of the subject could have given it;* and I agree with you, that this probably was the case. Nay, I am certain, that those numbers in the fourth volume of the Theological Repository, which are the subjects of your animadversion, were nearly two years posterior to the History of the Corruptions of Christianity. But what does this prove? It proves, you say, that, "as it seems, the subject of the miraculous conception is largely discussed in the History, &c. it must have received all the advantages which a long study of the subject could give it, in the Theological Repository."

But, pray, Sir, might not new light have been afterwards received by Dr. Priestley? Might not the study of the Fathers, which is

* Appeal, p. 45.

the foundation of his *History of Early Opinions*, have furnished him with additional information? And was it not, therefore, your duty, as his opponent, to have examined into the nature and degree of this information? If your ideas, like those of every fair disputant, were, that a writer ought to make himself acquainted with his subject in all its forms and connexions; since Dr. Priestley had *discussed* the miraculous conception *largely* in his *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, you should have read, at least, so much of this history, as would have satisfied you that there was nothing of importance in it, but what also occurred in the *Theological Repository*; and, as you could not avoid knowing that the same subject made a considerable part of his subsequent *History of Early Opinions*, you ought, above all, to have looked into this, for the very reason you give in favour of your examination of the papers in the *Theological Repository*; viz. that *as the subject had been largely discussed* in the two preceding publications, it must, *in the His-*

tory of Early Opinions, have received all the advantages which a long, and reiterated study could then give it.

You think it hard "that a man must purchase such a voluminous collection to come at all the arguments upon a given subject;" yet, when all these arguments are to be found no where but in this voluminous collection, can any one, who proposes to answer them, be regarded as adequate to the task he undertakes, if he neglect to examine this collection, voluminous as it may be? Will he examine at second-hand, or content himself with sketches and abstracts? If you reply, as you must, in the negative; is it not absolutely necessary that he provide himself with this voluminous collection? It must be a most curious vindication, which an answerer of Dr. Priestley would set up, upon this principle; that "he had fully refuted the doctor's arguments, but had not read the books which exhibited them in their greatest force, because he was not willing to be at the expense."

Indeed,

Indeed, the expense is trifling. Thirty-six shillings will purchase both the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, and that of *the Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*. And this, or indeed any expense whatsoever, to one who was engaged in the refutation of opinions, supposed to be erroneous, in the books in question, ought to be regarded as a matter of no importance. This, you yourself virtually acknowledge, in the very next sentence. *The last published (treatise) surely ought to have contained them all* (that is, all the arguments upon the subject). The *History of Early Opinions* is this last published treatise. How can you, then, on your own principles, neglect this for a prior publication?

Yet, even this, you may allege, will admit of a justification. For you tell me,* that "when you published your *Observations* " on the *Miraculous Conception*, in answer " to those of Dr. Priestley, you were far

* Appeal, p. 18.

“from obtruding them upon the world, as
“a *complete answer* to him.”

But what do you wish me to understand by a *complete answer*? Do you mean to convey this idea, that your observations are *insufficient* to overthrow Dr. Priestley's hypothesis? If so; why did you either publish them, or throw them into the form of a sermon,* and amuse your learned audience with what you were convinced was inadequate to the establishment of the point you seemed to labour? But this cannot be your meaning. You certainly designed them as a *sufficient* reply, or the publication must be nugatory, by your own confession. In this view, therefore, your neglect of the *History of Early Opinions* is as indefensible as in the other. It certainly was incumbent upon you to examine, closely, the *principal* of Dr. Priestley's arguments, *at least*, and to take them from

* Mr. Nisbett's Observations on the Miraculous Conception, were first preached in the form of a sermon at the visitation of Sir William Scott, at Canterbury, 1788. Nisbett's Pref. to the Obs. p. 2.

those

those parts of his works where they were exhibited in their greatest strength.

If the argument, therefore, turns against you, even on your own supposition; what will it do, if this very supposition be unfounded? What will be the consequence, if the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, in which you say, "it seems" (why do you not *examine* instead of conjecturing?) "the subject of the miraculous conception is *"LARGELY* discussed, contains *no discussion at all of it?"* For this is actually the case. The argument is not so much as *entered upon*, through the whole course of that history. On every supposition, therefore, the argument turns with full force against you; and not against you only, but against all those (and there are too many) who act on similar principles.

And now, Sir, let us proceed to the principal design of this reply. You tell me* "you can challenge any one to show wherein you have been nibbling at trifles, much less

* Appeal, p. 22.

" falsified

“ falsified his (Dr. Priestley’s) sentiments, or
 “ used the detested engine of odium theolo-
 “ gicum.”

This charge I have already declared you
 totally free from.

You proceed. “ Nothing like a proof of
 “ the use of any such mean arts, I am satis-
 “ fied, can be produced against me; and *my*
 “ *quotations from his writings will*, I believe,
 “ be found, upon examination, to be per-
 “ fectly *fair and accurate*.”

It is on this latter clause that you and I
 are to join issue. But, as this will necessarily
 lead me into a large field of particulars, I
 shall beg leave to defer the consideration of
 these to my next letter. In the mean time,

I am, SIR,

Your friend and real well-wisher,

J. POPE.

LETTER II.

ON DR. PRIESTLEY'S ARGUMENTS, AND MR. NISBETT'S MANNER OF CONSIDERING THEM.

SIR,

YOUR observation,* “that it is possible to assume the appearance of moderation and integrity, the more effectually to throw a reader off his guard, and to impose upon him,” is both just and sensible. The conclusion also which you deduce, that “with † strong ‡ appearances of candour, the evidences of *wilful misrepresentation* and *false citation*, ought to be very powerful, and the purposes which they were to serve,

* Appeal, p. 24.

† Ibid. p. 25.

‡ I am sure Mr. Nisbett will not condemn me for the insertion of the word *strong*, and for the alteration of *strong* to *powerful* in order to prevent tautology.

“clear

“clear and indubitable,” naturally follows from the premises.

If therefore, Sir, it should be shown, in the course of these letters, that the appearance of moderation and integrity which you assume, has a direct tendency to throw the reader off his guard, by inducing him to believe that you had produced the utmost evidence you could find, in favour of the principles against which your observations are directed, while, in reality, the contrary is the case; you must acknowledge that a very small degree of evidence will be necessary to lead to the conclusion, that if such arts are used in one case, they may also be used in another; and that the suppression of evidence, in many instances, affords no presumption of its being fairly adduced in any given one.

This is the discussion to which, against my inclination, I find myself forced, by the hasty pamphlet which you call *An Appeal to the Public*.

Dr.

Dr. Priestley's Observations on the Miraculous Conception, in the Theological Repository, vol. IV. consist of more than sixty pages, and, if printed in the same manner as your answer to him, would not take up less room than your whole pamphlet. Besides which, in vol. V. there are ten pages of remarks on the Roman Census. Observations on both these treatises make up the substance of your answer. If Dr. Priestley's arguments, therefore, are slight, or few, or so connected, that the removal of any leading one necessarily inferred the fall of several others, you may be very justifiable in employing so little pains as you have bestowed upon him. Or if his work be a mere string of conjectures, you are perfectly right in rejecting these as not worthy of regard, in the way of argument.

And this you roundly assert. "Dr. Priestley* has attempted to make up for this defect (the defect of argument) by wandering into the wide field of conjecture,

* Obs. on Mir. Concep. Pref. p. 4.

" and

"and he has indulged himself in it, in no common degree."

Not to remark, that this is no handsome method of prejudicing the reader, before he can have an opportunity of examining your arguments; let me ask you; do you really think that all those remarks of Dr. Priestley, the consideration of which you have omitted, are *conjectures* only? If you do, your ideas of argumentation must be singular indeed; if you do not, what excuse can you make for the omission?

Moreover, with respect to those arguments which you do quote, and to which you reply, how small a part do they make of those which Dr. Priestley has employed? On a fair computation, the sum of all your citations is scarcely more than the twentieth part of his remarks.

Whether such slight notice as this of a publication, which, I will undertake to say, is a continued system of argument, afford a presumption in favour of your claim to fairness

ness and candour, I will leave to your own determination.

To dwell no longer on general observations: give me leave to lay before you several instances of arguments adduced by Dr. Priestley, of great weight and importance, the consideration of which is absolutely necessary to the establishment of just ideas of the subject you had been considering; arguments which it behoved you to answer clearly and fully, before you could pretend to have gained any real advantage over him; but which you have passed by without the smallest notice. This I call unfair: and my assertion I prove by the following particulars.

The first extract you make from Dr. Priestley, is in the eleventh page of your Observations; and this, as you have given it, has all the appearance of being nothing more than wild and fanciful conjecture. But how does it appear in the Theological Repository?

"It

"It is universally acknowledged, that the
 "less reason there is to expect any particu-
 "lar event, the stronger evidence it requires.
 "A slight evidence is sufficient to certify
 "us of such facts as happen every day, or
 "very frequently. Miracles require much
 "stronger evidence; and, accordingly, such
 "evidence has always been provided.

"Thus, the resurrection of our Saviour be-
 "ing the most extraordinary, and, *a priori*, the
 "most improbable of all events, approach-
 "ing the nearest to an impossibility, the
 "evidence of it is remarkably circumstan-
 "tial; in consequence of which, there is not,
 "perhaps, any fact, in all ancient history, so
 "perfectly credible, according to the most
 "established rules of evidence, as it is. And
 "the arguments, *a priori*, in this case, are
 "as striking as those which may be called
 "the arguments *a posteriori*, or the proper
 "historical proof. Because we are able to
 "see the importance of the fact, the evi-
 "dence of which was required to be so ex-
 "ceedingly clear. Christ, coming to give
 "mankind

“ mankind the fullest assurance of an uni-
 “ versal resurrection, it was obviously ne-
 “ cessary, at least, highly desirable, that,
 “ besides solemnly announcing the doctrine,
 “ and confirming it by miracles, he should
 “ himself actually die and rise again, as a
 “ proof of it. Accordingly, we find that
 “ Christ did rest the evidence of his divine
 “ mission, in a particular manner, on the
 “ event of his resurrection. We therefore
 “ see clearly why it behoved Christ both
 “ to die and to rise again from the dead.

“ Now, are we able to discover any reason
 “ why Christ should be born of a virgin, ra-
 “ ther than in the usual way? Can we con-
 “ ceive it to have been at all necessary or ad-
 “ vantageous to the main object of his mis-
 “ sion, or to qualify him for fulfilling it? I
 “ think I may answer for all unitarians, that,
 “ *à priori*, we should rather have thought
 “ otherwise; viz. that there would have
 “ been a greater propriety in his being, in

D

“ this,

“ this, as well as in all other respects, what
“ other men are.”*

But all this (excepting part of the last paragraph) which is a connected chain of argument, calling for the closest examination, and on which the passages you have quoted have an immediate dependance, you have left uninvalidated and even unnoticed. Declamation is introduced,† on these very events from which Dr. Priestley draws his argument, as if he had not touched upon them; though this very declamation is actually *precluded* by his arguments themselves.

This I call one instance of unfair concealment of evidence.

In your next quotation‡ you pursue the same method. You give Dr. Priestley’s conclusion only, omitting the general principles from which it is deduced. I shall, therefore, take the liberty to present to your view, the

* Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 249—251. Hist. of Earl. Opin. vol. IV. p. 18—20.

† p. 13.

‡ p. 17.

passages which you ought to have taken in connexion with that which you have cited.

“ The value of the gospel depends not at all upon any idea we may have of *the person of Christ*. All that we ought to regard is the *object of his mission*, and the *authority* with which his doctrine was promulgated.”*

But this, Sir, you have omitted, though it contains the very principles from which the passage you have produced, is drawn as a conclusion. For, if the value of the gospel depend only on the object of Christ's mission, and the authority with which his doctrine was promulgated, it follows directly, that “ the doctrine of immortality is just as acceptable from the mouth of the son of Joseph and Mary, as from the mouth of an angel, or from the voice of God, speaking from heaven.”

It was, therefore, I should think, incumbent upon you, if you meant to combat this

* Theol Rep. vol. IV. p. 246. Hist. of Earl. Opin. vol. IV. p. 8.

last assertion (which is the only one you have quoted) to remove the previous observations, and, consequently, to *produce* them as part of Dr. Priestley's argument in this place. But this you have not done. You have contented yourself with declaiming, through four pages, on the last passage only; and there the matter ends.

This is the *second* citation, and, I am sorry to say, the second instance of unfair concealment.

Your next quotation is that of a passage so remote in place from this last, that it might appear, to an uninformed reader, a difficult matter to account for so wide a vacuity. He would naturally suppose that here the first part of Dr. Priestley's treatise ended, and that the interval was filled up, by other pieces. But no such thing is the case. Dr. Priestley's observations, though consisting of two parts, are immediately connected, without any intervening publication. What then can account for your passing, all at once, from the preceding passages, which are at the
beginning

beginning of these observations, to those which are at more than the distance of *thirty* pages? * Will you say that the intermediate ones contain nothing of importance? of this let a judgment be formed from the following extracts.

† “ In the scriptures, mankind are generally apprised of all the great measures that God has been pleased to take with respect to them. Our Saviour informs his disciples, very particularly, why it was expedient that he should die, and leave them for a time; assuring them that it was for their own advantage; and, with respect to those reasons which they were not, at that time, qualified to enter into, he plainly told them they were not; and that, for that reason,

* Mr. Nisbett does indeed refer (p. 45.) to some of the intervening pages; viz. p. 266—268, but takes scarcely any notice of the arguments contained in them. He also takes notice of a clause in p. 252, but not in the connexion in which it is here exhibited.

† Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 252. Hist. of Earl Op. vol. IV. p. 21—23.

“ the communication of more knowledge to
 “ them was deferred.

“ Now, are any reasons given us in the
 “ scriptures, to show that it was more proper
 “ that Christ was to be born of a virgin,
 “ than in the usual way ? Or is it there said,
 “ that there was a reason for it, but that
 “ men were not qualified to understand it ?
 “ Neither of these is the case :* *and what is*
 “ *particularly remarkable, a thing of this ex-*
 “ *traordinary kind is not so much as mentioned,*
 “ *or in the most distant manner alluded to, by*
 “ *Christ himself, or by any writer in the New*
 “ *Testament ;* so that, if the doctrine be true,
 “ it does not appear to have answered any
 “ end whatever. And it is by no means
 “ analogous to the usual conduct of divine
 “ Providence to take extraordinary measures,
 “ without a proportionable object and use.”

* The clause in italics is taken notice of by Mr. Nisbett in p. 45, &c. but not as a part of the present argument, which is of equal force whether this clause be omitted or inserted. I have inserted it, to show the manner in which the argument is conducted.

“ According

“ According to all appearance, therefore,
 “ if the doctrine of the miraculous concep-
 “ tion be true, God wrought a most extraor-
 “ dinary miracle without any proper object
 “ or use. Nay, as far as we can judge,
 “ such a *pretension* as that of a miraculous
 “ birth, unless it had been more particularly
 “ authenticated than the gospel represents
 “ this to have been, must have operated
 “ greatly to the prejudice of our Saviour’s
 “ character; and, consequently, must have
 “ obstructed the end of his mission. For,
 “ without the most circumstantial evidence,
 “ for which no provision was made, the story
 “ of the miraculous conception would never
 “ have been believed by the Jews; and does
 “ not this circumstance render the *wisdom*
 “ of the scheme very questionable? For
 “ though it must always be acknowledged
 “ that the ways of God, even with respect
 “ to men, may be inscrutable to men; yet,
 “ when nothing is said of such wisdom, and
 “ no such submission of our judgment is re-
 “ quired of us, the facts from which such

“mysterious conduct is inferred, ought not
 “to be admitted without proportionably
 “clear evidence.”*

† “That the circumstance of Christ *pre-*
 “*tending* to a miraculous birth would have
 “had an unfavourable effect on his charac-
 “ter and credit in his life-time, all the
 “fathers, who speak of it, readily acknow-
 “ledge; and the character of his mother,
 “they say, would have sustained an irre-
 “parable injury. They also acknowledge
 “that, even had the fact been known and
 “proved, the great object of his mission
 “would have been in great danger of being
 “defeated; as it was of the greatest im-
 “portance to the success of the scheme, that
 “Christ should not be known to be the Mes-
 “siah, at so early a period,” &c.

I have already remarked to you, Sir,
 your unfair concealment of these, and other
 such passages. I shall now take the liberty

* Theol. Rep. ib. p. 253, 254. Hist. of Earl. Op.
 vol. IV. p. 24, 25.

† Thol. Rep. p. 259. Hist. ib. p. 42.

of doing more, and cannot help asking you this plain question; how came you to claim, as your own, the observations you make on the subjects of the two last paragraphs,* when every sentiment, of importance, which you advance, is taken from these paragraphs, and from one of larger extent which Dr. Priestley gives in the next pages, from Chrysostom? This is not merely suppression of evidence, but an unauthorized use of the observations of your antagonist, without thanking or even noticing him.

On this, however, I do not wish to press the argument too closely upon you. Let me

* See Nisbett on the Mir. Concept. p. 46—48, where he says, "The ground I am now upon, has been trodden but by few, if any, before me." Whereas Dr. Priestley employs no less than *six* pages (p. 259—264, Hist. p. 42, &c.) in observations, from the fathers, tending to prove the point which Mr. Nisbett here claims as, in a great measure, his own discovery; that (to use his own words) "*there are no certain traces of this remarkable history (the Miraculous Conception) being made public, during our Saviour's life.*"

proceed

proceed to another of the unnoticed passages, which is the conclusion from the former observations.

“ But it does not seem to have occurred
 “ to any of these fathers, that every reason
 “ for the *concealment* of the miraculous con-
 “ ception from the Jews, is an argument
 “ against the *propriety* and *wisdom* of the
 “ measure itself; and, therefore, an argument
 “ against the truth of the fact; for, certainly,
 “ a circumstance, which they acknowledge
 “ to have been so highly improbable, and
 “ of apparent disservice to the scheme of
 “ christianity, requires very clear and strong
 “ evidence of its truth.”*

Should such arguments have been passed over in silence?

In answering Dr. Priestley's Observation, that “ the miraculous conception does not
 “ seem to have been mentioned or alluded
 “ to by Christ himself, or any writer of the

* Theol. Rep. ub. sup. p. 260. Hist. p. 44.

“New Testament,”*—you say that this is the substance of the doctor’s remarks in another place, and refer to the Theological Repository, vol. IV. p. 266—268.

But certainly you must have looked over these pages very carelessly, to be unapprised that they contain observations of considerable importance, which you ought to have taken notice of, as they have a close connexion with others on which you animadvert, with no small degree of freedom. To convince you of this, let me give you a short extract or two.

“The observation which I wish to impress
 “upon my reader is this; that fully to
 “establish the credibility of any fact, it must
 “not only be recorded by cotemporary his-
 “torians, but it must also appear not to
 “have been contradicted by those who were
 “cotemporary with the historians, and who
 “may be supposed to have been as good

* Theol. Rep. ib. p. 252. ap. Nisbett on the Mir. Con, p. 45.

“judges

“ judges as the historians themselves. Still
 “ less will the single circumstance of an event
 “ being recorded by cotemporary historians
 “ avail to establish the credit of it, if it ap-
 “ pear not to have been believed by those
 “ who may be supposed to have been favour-
 “ ably inclined to the belief of it, and so
 “ have wished it to be true.” *

This he illustrates† by a fact supposed to
 be related by Livy or Sallust, or ten or twelve
 credible historians; but which appeared not
 to have been believed at the time to which
 these historians refer it; “ we might not be
 “ able to deny that these historians wrote the
 “ account, but we should immediately say,
 “ if it was true, why does it not appear to
 “ have been believed at the time?—We
 “ might not be able to account for the mis-
 “ apprehensions and mistakes of the histo-
 “ rians; but, in fact, their evidence would
 “ only be considered as that of ten or twelve

* Theol. Rep. *ibid.* p. 266. Hist. p. 59.

† Theol. Rep. p. 266, 267. Hist. p. 59—61.

“ men

“men opposed to the evidence of more than
“ten or twelve millions.”

These observations Dr. Priestley makes, in order to illustrate his supposition, that
“Matthew and Luke are simply historians,
“whose credit must be determined by the
“circumstances in which they wrote, and
“the nature of the facts which they relate.”*

And though I do not fully agree with him in this opinion, I cannot help thinking, Sir, that instead of declamation,† it would have been most proper to have given your readers solid argument against the doctor's hypothesis.

This I say with the more confidence, as it is the plain tendency of these observations to preclude such objections, as might bear hard upon the general credibility of the sacred historians, on the supposition of their being *mere* historians. And therefore I cannot help thinking that, by pressing such objections,

* Theol. Rep. p. 265. Hist. p. 58.

† Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 53—55.

without first removing the above observations, you do not do that justice to the doctor's reasoning which it may fairly lay claim to.

But, whatever becomes of the argument against the inspiration of the historical parts of the New Testament, the following, which is consistent with their inspiration, and required to be seriously considered, you have passed by without notice.

* "However, if the credit of Livy and Sallust was so well established, that we could not believe that they would assert as a fact, what they might have easily known not to be so; we should say that, though we had no method of accounting for such a narration being found in the copies of their works, which have come down to us, we are satisfied that it was not of their composition."—"And if we had any evidence that there were, in early times, copies of entire histories,"—*without the*

* Theol. Rep. ib. p. 267, 268. Hist. p. 61, 62.

fact referred to,—" nothing farther, I
 " imagine, would be wanting to our entire
 " satisfaction on the subject."

" Now these very material observations,
 " and many others, apply to the case before
 " us: it is true that we do find the story of
 " the miraculous conception in the *received*
 " gospels of Matthew and Luke."—" But it
 " is no less certain, that there were, in early
 " times, gospels of Matthew and of Luke
 " too which did not contain that story; and
 " there is sufficient reason to think that the
 " great body of Jewish christians, who were
 " cotemporary with the apostles, did not be-
 " lieve it."—" This disbelief extended also
 " to the gentile converts, probably the ma-
 " jority of them, even in the time of Justin
 " Martyr."*

" A circumstance of greater weight than
 " even this, is, that the Gnostics of that
 " age, to whose peculiar systems the doc-

* Theol. Rep. p. 278. See also Hist. of Earl. Op.
 vol. III. chap. xiii. xiv. xv.

"trine of the miraculous conception could
 "not but have appeared exceedingly favour-
 "able, did likewise reject it as fabulous."

This "is a fact more extraordinary, and
 "more unfavourable to the credibility of it,
 "than the disbelief of it by any of the
 "Catholic Christians, Jews or Gentiles; be-
 "cause this doctrine would have suited re-
 "markably well with their other principles.
 "In reality, the belief of the miraculous
 "conception might have been more naturally
 "expected of them, than of any persons of
 "that age. They thought Christ to have
 "been a pre-existent, intelligent being, equal
 "in power, and superior in goodness to him
 "that made the world.— That they did not
 "embrace the opinion of the miraculous
 "conception, could be owing to nothing
 "but their not finding sufficient historical
 "evidence for it." *

This argument, so material, and I may
 say, so essential to the proof of Dr. Priestley's

* Theol. Rep. p. 280. Hist. p. 63, 91. &c.

general position; proposed with so much strength, and requiring peculiar attention, you have left unnoticed, excepting the last part relating to the Gnostics, which you have separated from the rest, as if it made no part of the chain; and have touched upon it, very slightly indeed, in a short note only.*

As my design in this letter is merely to state to you a number of instances, which appear to me to be not at all favourable to that character of fairness, to which you lay claim, I have refrained from making any other than such short remarks as naturally arose from the subject. It is not my wish to be unjust or uncandid, in this very mode of vindication on which you have forced me. On this account, I would in general leave the facts to speak for themselves. My own opinion I should be sorry to give with any severity of language. I will trouble you with only one instance more, before I proceed to the justification of myself, in that case, on which you seem to be the

* Nisb. on the Mir. Conc. p. 86.

most hurt, the charge of misrepresentation in your citation from Ignatius. This shall close not only this letter, but also every discussion between us which can properly be called *personal*.

The passages which I am now going to lay before you, I cannot help regarding as fundamental in the argument. Indeed they are of such a sort, that a very great part of the stress of it must rest upon them. If there be striking inconsistencies in the histories of the miraculous conception, the authenticity of this supposed part of scripture will necessarily be much affected. On the principle of the inspiration of the gospels it must be totally overthrown. And even on that of the fallibility of the historians, I cannot help confessing it as my private sentiment, that the admission of a fact, so full of difficulties, without any marks by which it might be distinguished from the events which are acknowledged to be true, would infer such a degree of credulity in the two evangelists

gelists who record it, as would materially shake their general authority.

On this account, I should be unwilling to consider Matthew and Luke as in any danger of committing so important an error in their narrations.

But not to detain you with observations; let me present to your view the passages which I think you ought particularly to have attended to, but on which, as on several others of great importance, you are totally silent.

“ * If we read the gospels of Matthew
 “ and Luke without the two first chapters,
 “ we shall not find the want of them; as in
 “ the subsequent history there is no reference
 “ to them, and some things that are rather
 “ inconsistent with them. Thus, whenever
 “ either of these two writers speak of Jesus
 “ being called the *son of Joseph*, as well as of
 “ Mary, after he came into public life, they
 “ never make any remark upon it, or objec-

* Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 290—295. Hist. p. 110
 —121.

" tion to it.--- It may be replied that having
 " related the history of the miraculous con-
 " ception so much at large before, they had
 " no occasion to introduce any explanation
 " afterwards.--- Still, however, I think it
 " would not have been unnatural,* for both
 " Matthew and Luke to have referred to the
 " history of the miraculous conception on
 " some particular occasions, as when they
 " gave an account of his being despised for
 " being the son of a carpenter. This, at
 " least, might have been expected of Mark
 " and John, who had given no history of
 " the miraculous conception at all.

* Dr. Priestley does not seem here to give this obser-
 vation in its full strength. For it appears to me, not
 only natural, but even highly expedient, if not necessary,
 that the writers of the New Testament should advert
 plainly to the miraculous conception, especially when
 Christ was now ascended into heaven, and christianity
 could not suffer, but must gain additional lustre from
 allusions to an event so pregnant with exalted ideas of
 the high dignity of his nature and person. That there
 should be an universal silence on this head is not at all
 favourable to the fact itself.

" The

“ The very genealogies in the gospels of
 “ Matthew and Luke amount also to a con-
 “ futation of the hypothesis adopted by these
 “ writers; and therefore should seem to be
 “ the work of other hands than those who
 “ wrote the gospels. And that of Matthew
 “ may well be supposed to have been written
 “ by one person, and the rest of the two
 “ chapters by another. For of what conse-
 “ quence was it to give the genealogy of
 “ Joseph for that of Jesus, when, according
 “ to them, Jesus was no more descended
 “ from Joseph, than he was from Herod.

“ The genealogy of Luke has by some
 “ moderns been supposed to be that of Mary,
 “ ---but, according to the ancients, both
 “ the genealogies are those of Joseph; that
 “ in Matthew, *by natural descent*, he being
 “ the proper son of Jacob; and that in
 “ Luke, by law; Heli, the supposed bro-
 “ ther of Jacob, having adopted his son
 “ Joseph.---But, on this principle, the ge-
 “ nealogy was a mere deception; and had
 “ the Jews known how the case stood, it

“ would have given them no sort of satisfac-
 “ tion. --- No doubt, the Jews understood the
 “ prophecies concerning the descent of the
 “ Messiah from David, to mean that he
 “ should be the son of some man who should
 “ be lineally descended from David. The
 “ insertion of any *daughter of David* would,
 “ in their opinion, have vitiated the whole
 “ genealogy. They must, therefore, have
 “ considered one of these genealogies as di-
 “ rectly contradicting the other.

“ The two histories of the miraculous con-
 “ ception are themselves remarkably differ-
 “ ent from each other; --- there are such
 “ capital circumstances in each of the ac-
 “ counts, omitted by the other, as it can
 “ hardly be supposed would have been omit-
 “ ted, if the writers had been acquainted
 “ with them. Would Luke --- have omit-
 “ ted --- the visit of the wise men of the east,
 “ the massacre of the children, and the jour-
 “ ney into Egypt? Or Matthew --- the
 “ speeches of the angels, the story of the
 “ shepherds, the prophecies of Simeon and
 “ Anna;

“ Anna ; --- and the birth of John the Bap-
 “ tist ?

“ The narrative of Luke, is so far from
 “ coinciding with that of Matthew, that it
 “ is hardly possible to find in it room for the
 “ journey into Egypt. According to Luke,
 “ Jesus was presented at Jerusalem as soon
 “ as the days of Mary’s purification were
 “ expired, and then returned directly to
 “ Nazareth without going any more to
 “ Bethlehem ; where, indeed, it does not
 “ appear, that Joseph had any habitation or
 “ friends : so that the wise men of Matthew,
 “ who are supposed to have found the child
 “ at Bethlehem, must have arrived in the
 “ country long after Mary had left the place.
 “ On the contrary, Matthew must have sup-
 “ posed that Jesus was kept at Bethlehem
 “ near two years after his birth, and was
 “ carried from thence into Egypt. Indeed,
 “ one cannot help inferring, from the account
 “ of Matthew, that Joseph and Mary were
 “ properly of Bethlehem, that they did not
 “ settle in Nazareth till after their return

“ from Egypt ; and that they made choice
 “ of this place, as being out of the territory
 “ of Archelaus, the son of Herod. Had
 “ Matthew supposed Jesus to have been at
 “ Nazareth, in Galilee, at the time of his
 “ persecution by Herod, he would hardly
 “ have thought of sending him to Egypt, as
 “ a place of safety, when, in order to come
 “ thither, he must have passed through the
 “ whole extent of Herod’s dominion. —

“ If we examine each of the accounts se-
 “ parately, --- they have both too much the
 “ air of fable ; and the application of scrip-
 “ ture, in the account ascribed to Matthew,
 “ is very far from being such as can recom-
 “ mend it. Jesus, going into Egypt, and
 “ returning from it, is made to be a fulfil-
 “ ment of a prophecy of Hosea, which is no
 “ prophecy at all ; but simply the mention
 “ of God having called his son, the Israelites,
 “ as a nation, out of that country. And Jesus
 “ is to settle at Nazareth ; because the Messiah
 “ was to be a Nazarene ; whereas, all that
 “ can be imagined to give any countenance
 “ to

“ to this in the Old Testament, is, that he
 “ was to be despised and rejected of men;
 “ and Nazareth was a despicable place. —

“ As to the story of Luke, to say nothing
 “ of the long and improbable speeches it
 “ contains; --- and the vision of angels to the
 “ shepherds, which has so much the air of
 “ fable; it implies such an early declaration
 “ of Jesus being the Messiah, as is incom-
 “ patible with the whole plan of the gospel
 “ history.”

And now, Sir, allowing you due praise
 for the candour of your expressions, and yet
 at the same time considering these instances
 of important arguments, untouched and to-
 tally neglected by you; arguments essential
 to the subject; entering into its very nature
 and foundation; and which (how far so ever
 from a complete answer your observations
 were intended to be) could not be over-
 looked without either hurting your cause, or
 misleading your readers; --- can I be looked
 upon as guilty of a great breach of justice

and

and candour, if I call such repeated omissions, unfair suppression of evidence?

If such instances therefore deserve blame, which I think you cannot deny, why should you be so much offended at my expression of honest indignation at your misquotation from Ignatius, as to think it deserved such a public, and I may say, unjust reprehension as you have given it, and for which you now, in a private letter, say you are sorry?

As I thought it in the highest degree improbable, that a person should accidentally hit upon a passage, exactly to his purpose, in so voluminous a set of books as Coletarius's *Patres Apostolici*, that he should happily miss all the other fathers; and amidst upwards of fifteen hundred pages, in a language, the construction of which is not very obvious; dip upon the only one, who mentioned the miraculous conception, and upon the only place, where the gospel of St. Matthew is plainly referred to;—you will not, I think, condemn me, when I followed the most probable idea, and charged to misrepresentation,

presentation, that which you tell me arose from inadvertency alone.

I do not regard myself as one of the most attentive of readers; but I believe I may safely assert that I should not have been guilty of a similar mistake. To read (as I imagined you had done) the epistles of Ignatius; to know that there were two sorts of these, the one called genuine, and the other allowed to be forged; and, having a point to support which could be better sustained by the forged than the genuine epistles, to have recourse to such forged epistles; appeared to me so much the effect of design, as to be incapable of being referred to chance and accident only.

Every new book, the materials of which are derived from prior publications, ought, in my opinion, to be the means of shortening the road to learning. Unfairness in quotation has the contrary effect. You dare not read a treatise deformed by such arts, without having a continual recourse to the original authorities. Thus knowledge, instead of
being

being advanced, is really impeded; and the experience of a few instances of this unfair method of procedure, spreads a general suspicion over the reader's mind, who, unless he has much patience indeed, will be tempted to abandon such studies for the more pleasurable, though less useful branches of mere literary amusement.

On this account, I do not think that any terms can be too severe against those who are wilfully guilty of such unworthy practices. At the same time, I cannot totally exculpate even the careless transcriber. - A man must be inattentive to a blameable degree, who examines neither title page, contents, running title, nor notes on an author in whom he is interested. It cannot be expected that he should read through the whole, or even a great part of every book which he consults. But he undoubtedly ought to make such an examination, as to be certain, that nothing can be objected to him, from the same author, as inconsistent with the citation he has made.

As

As I do not wish to push the argument any farther, than may be sufficient to place my own conduct in the light in which it ought to be regarded, that of a sincere desire to promote the cause of truth and fairness, I shall here content myself with a single remark more, in reply to one of yours, that * *as I myself acknowledge the smaller epistles of Ignatius to be favourable to the doctrine of the miraculous conception, it is the same thing, whether you had quoted the one or the other: both being equally to your purpose.*

But have you forgot, Sir, your own words, † “ I shall make no comments upon
 “ this testimony (the *forged* testimony) of
 “ Ignatius, but only observe, that if it is his
 “ genuine composition, written about the
 “ year 116, it will be a considerable evidence
 “ in favour of the authenticity of those chapters
 “ in our gospels which contain this fact of our
 “ Lord's history.” The same sentiment you

* Nisb. Appeal, p. 35—37.

† Nisb. on the Mir. Con. p. 106, 107.

express

express in the beginning * of your appendix, where you take notice of this passage of Ignatius, and concerning which, you say that he "particularly mentions the history of the "miraculous conception, and *almost in the "words of the evangelist."*†

Is not this very different from a mere declaration of opinion; which is the utmost to which the passages in the smaller epistles can possibly amount to? For I can hardly imagine that the single circumstance of Ignatius's being the companion of the apostles,

* p. 101.

† In p. 54. (note) of your *Appeal*, you say that you "did not consider yourself as a *party* in the dispute on the authenticity of Ignatius's epistles." But you were certainly, Sir, so much *concerned* in it, at least, as to wish your argument in the appendix to appear just and conclusive; and as this rested on the authenticity of the epistle you quoted, you might be said to be a *party* in it. When I wrote to you, I thought you a very *interested*, and not an *unprejudiced* party. Indeed I regarded you as very *unfairly biassed*. It would be unjust in me, after the disavowal you have made, to express or continue to entertain the same ideas.

will

will make all his opinions to be of apostolic authority. Now there is no medium between this and fallibility: and therefore if he might be mistaken in one case, he might be mistaken also in another; and the miraculous conception standing upon the evidence of his *opinion* only, can claim no more belief, than any other peculiar idea which Ignatius might entertain. So that the difference is very material between the weight of the evidence of those two epistles, even supposing them both to have come from Ignatius.

I am, SIR,

Your friend and servant,

J. POPE.

POSTSCRIPT.

In a private letter which I received from you, while I was copying the above for the press, you inform me, that *Dr. Priestley*

thanks

thanks you for the candour with which you have conducted yourself in your reply to him. It is not for me to interpret Dr. Priestley's expressions. But he certainly could not mean, that you had either exhibited all his arguments, or that even those which you had noticed, were presented by you in all the force which they deserved. As to any other instances, in which a candid temper might be shewn, such as polite expressions, and external marks of respect, you cannot be insensible that I have myself acknowledged these in the completest sense of the words.

You also tell me, that, with respect to the letter which called forth your appeal, Dr. Priestley says, "he can hardly think any man would wilfully misrepresent any thing in a public controversy, and that he is far from supposing you to be guilty of it."

I hope I have myself convinced you of my unwillingness to bring such a charge against you. I would not have done it in the very beginning, if I had known how to avoid it. The circumstances as stated both
in

in the letter quoted by you in your appeal,* and in that which is prefixed to this correspondence, you cannot avoid acknowledging to be very strong; but they would never have appeared to the world, and, perhaps, you might have convinced me of your innocence, if you had not been so hasty in, what I cannot help calling, your unwarrantable publication.

My disposition was never so bent to obstinacy, as to refuse the apology even of an enemy. Much less was I inclined to disbelieve the declaration of one who had a character of such respectability to support as you have.

You should remember, you actually *put it out of my power* to retract, or even to discuss any thing, by your hasty printing. The inconvenience, if there be any, ought therefore to be your own.

At present, however, as you have made a serious and repeated declaration, that the error you have committed arose from inattention

* p. 50—52, note.

only, I should account myself uncandid indeed, if I did not admit your plea; and can only lament that, instead of confining this to a private letter, you have, by your too great precipitation, made both yourself and me objects of laughter, to the unconcerned public.

A SECOND POSTSCRIPT.

When I had finished the transcription of the former letters for the press, I pleased myself with the idea, that the personal part of this controversy was completely ended. But a letter from you, dated April 27th, disappointed my expectation.

In this you tell me (and expect me to lay your remarks before the public)

1. That, in this controversy, I am the aggressor:

2. That I stepped out of my way to attack you, in a dispute in which I had no immediate or personal concern; and that the manner in which I did it was so reprehensible,

hensible, as to entitle me to no peculiar delicacy of treatment.

3. That though the correspondence, which I had so improperly begun, might be called a private one, you had no grounds to imagine, but that I, a mere stranger as I was, who had exhibited against you the charge of wilful misrepresentation, in a style so uncourtly, and with so much unqualified severity, might communicate to my friends my sentiments of your supposed baseness of conduct; and this communication might, eventually, be detrimental to you, in character or interest.

4. That as I had called upon you, unconditionally, to retract your error in a public manner, this apprehension was by no means without foundation; that, therefore, if the step you took, of an appeal to the public, was a hasty one, the occasion, in some measure, justified it.

And 5. That as I had now exculpated you from the charge referred to, the controversy, as a personal one, ought to be dropped by me: but that, on the contrary, I accuse you of other instances of unfairness, different from

this, from a *pique* that you had been able to vindicate yourself, and a determination, at all adventures, to find something in your book, that might injure your reputation.

You then put to me these two questions ;

Whether, in your Observations on the Miraculous Conception, you have any where proposed to give a full and complete answer to Dr. Priestley ?

And, whether the observations you have made are not of real, nay, of much greater importance, than any which you may have omitted.*

You hence conclude, that though you may have passed over, in silence, many observations of Dr. Priestley, and important ones

* I suppose you mean, whether the observations of Dr. Priestley, to which you have replied, are not of more importance, than those which you have omitted the consideration of. For this is the only sense which can lead to the conclusion you draw. Though I have taken the liberty to change the words and order of the passages in your letter, I could not regard myself as authorized to alter the sense, though I am convinced that you could not intend the sense which the words seem to bear.

too,

too, yet that this may have been done without incurring the smallest imputation of unfairness.

This is the substance of what you urge; and I believe you will not say that I have placed your arguments in a weaker light, than you have yourself. My reply, to save many words, shall be in the same order.

1. If by aggressor is meant the *first writer* I am the aggressor; but if, as I am apt to think, it is the person who unnecessarily brings the dispute before the public, *you* are liable to this charge.

2. When an author presents his works to the world, every one has a right to make application to him, either by private letter, or in the way of public discussion, on any subject which the author treats of. Under this idea, I wrote to you. Nor can I conceive, that you had a right to publish the letter which I sent, before you had gained my concurrence. I do not say, that an author is obliged to answer *all* the letters which are sent him: nor do I think that he ought even

to receive such as may make him *liable to expense*. But, setting aside this, as his work is an appeal to all mankind, all mankind have a right to apply to him for information, in those things, at least, which are *important* in the points which he discusses. As to the *manner*, I have stated my sentiments already.

3. The whole of the remark in this head is founded upon mere *suspicion*; and implies so little confidence in the justice of a man's cause, as can reflect no honour on him, who would seriously use it. Besides, charges even of *immoralities*, accompanied with undue severity in him who brings them, are weakened in proportion to this severity. So that, in this view, your fears ought to have been less, in the exact ratio of the supposed uncourtlinefs of the style you complain of. Why then should you express such mighty alarm as to what mischief might befall you, from a mere letter, to which you might have replied when, and in what terms, you pleased?

4. I had not, nor have I now, any notion that an acknowledgment of error (for I did
not

not ask you to *tell the public* that you were *guilty of misrepresentation*) by means of the Reviews, would hurt your character. I should rather have supposed that it would exalt it, by making the world think more highly of your fairness and candour.

5. The personal part of the controversy shall be dropped here. The reply to your other observations may be gathered from the preceding and following letters, from which the public and yourself must judge, how far I have been actuated by just principles, or have pursued a right method in the conduct of the controversy between us.

LETTER III.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS ON THE EBIONITE
GOSPEL, AND THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION.

SIR,

AS I have now ended every thing properly personal, in the controversy in which you have engaged me, I shall willingly turn my attention to the discussion of the subject itself; not, indeed, with the view of treating it either fully or systematically, but of making such observations as naturally arise, from different topics, as they present themselves to notice.

In my last letter, among other passages quoted from Dr. Priestley, was one, in which it is asserted that there were, in the early times of christianity, gospels which did not contain the narrative of the miraculous conception.

One of these was the Nazarene or Ebionite gospel. That this is of high antiquity is acknowledged

acknowledged by Mr. Jones,* who was no friend to it. He dates its publication at the year of Christ 67 or 68. Now this is so near to the date of St. Matthew's gospel, which Dr. Lardner† fixes about the year 64, as to lead to a suspicion, that these gospels might originally be the same. And this is rendered probable by the consideration, that they were both written for the same purpose, the instruction of the Hebrew converts; and in the same language, the Hebrew of those times, or what is more properly called the Syro-Chaldaic.‡

Now these converts, according to Mr. Jones himself, were very numerous.¶ “We

* Method for settling the Canonic Auth. of the New Test. vol. I. part II. ch. xxix. See also ch. xxvii. xxviii.

† Works, vol. VI. p. 56.

‡ Williams on the Authenticity of the first and second chapters of St. Matthew, p. 3—45. Pere Simon Hist. Crit. du Nouv. Test. ch. v. vi. Michaelis's Introd. Lectures to the New Test. § 89, 90.

¶ Jones ubi sup. p. 319, 32.

"are told (says he) Acts xxi. 20. of
 "many ~~people~~ (ten thousands) of Jews, that
 "believed and received the doctrine of
 "Christ." He describes them, indeed, as
 mixing Judaism with Christianity; and in-
 forms us, from Epiphanius, that they differ-
 ed little from the Jews, except in their belief
 of Christ. These were the people who ad-
 mitted this gospel, as the authentic gospel of
 St. Matthew.

And in this they have the suffrages of the
 most eminent fathers. Theodoret says
 plainly, that both the kinds of the Ebionites
 received no other gospel than that of St.
 Matthew. The same is declared also by Ire-
 næus.† Eusebius asserts that Symmachus

* Origen (adv. Cels. p. 272.) speaks of two kinds
 of Ebionites, one who denied, and the other who be-
 lieved the miraculous conception, the last of which are
 supposed by some to be the same as the Nazarenes: but
 that both these were the same sect is proved by Dr.
 Priestley's Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. III. book III.
 ch. viii.

† Priestley's Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. III. p. 212, 213.
 Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 277.

endeavours

endeavours to support the heresy of the Ebionites, from the gospel of St. Matthew,* which is a proof that the Ebionite gospel was that of St. Matthew; that it contained nothing contrary to the Ebionite principles; and, consequently, had not the miraculous conception.

Jerom,† who was perhaps a better judge in these matters than any of the fathers, except Origen,

* Lardner's Works, vol. II. p. 307, 308.

† The account which Jerom gives concerning the gospel of St. Matthew, in his *Catalogus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum*, is as follows:

Matthæus, qui et Levi, ex publicano apostolus, primus in Judæa, propter eos, qui ex circumcisione crediderant, evangelium Christi Hebraicis literis verbisque composuit. Quod quis postea in Græcum transtulerit non satis certum est.

Porro, ipsum Hebraicum habetur, usque hodie, in Cæsarensi bibliotheca, quam Pamphilus Martyr studiosissime confecit. Mihi quoque a Nazareis, qui in Berœa, urbe Syriæ, hoc volumine utuntur, describendi facultas fuit.

In quo animadvertendum, quod ubicunque evangelista, five ex persona sua, five ex persona domini salvatoris, veteris

Origen, says expressly that the Hebrew gospel of the Nazarenes, was that of St. Matthew

veteris scripturæ testimoniis utitur, non sequatur Septuaginta translatorum auctoritatem, sed Hebraicam; e quibus illa duo sunt, *Ex Egypto vocavi filium meum, et, quoniam Nazareus vocabitur.*

The difficulty, in these passages, is to determine to what *In quo* at the beginning of the third, has a reference. Many apply it to the Nazarene gospel. But I cannot regard it as intended to relate to any thing but the gospel of St. Matthew, as it then existed in Greek, among the general body of christians.

For, the design of Jerom here is to give an account of the gospel of St. Matthew, as it was received in his time, not of any particular copy of it, farther than as this copy established his assertion, that the gospel was originally written in the Hebrew language. To say that the Nazarene gospel was in Hebrew, and the quotations from the Old Testament in it were taken from the original text, in that language, would be no proof at all; for this they might be, and yet the Greek be the original copy, and the Nazarene a corrupted version. But to produce this Nazarene gospel, in Hebrew, and to show, in connexion with it, that the quotations in the Greek itself were taken, not from the Septuagint, but from the Hebrew scriptures, would be directly to his purpose,

thew. Epiphanius himself,* the greatest enemy of the Ebionites, acknowledges the same,

purpose, and establish his assertion, that the original of this gospel was in Hebrew. If these proofs are to be taken from the Nazarene gospel, it may be fairly asserted, that they would be taken from such parts of it, as *differed* from the quotations in the Greek edition. But is this the case? Does Jerom produce, for this purpose, any instance from the Nazarene gospel, in which it differs from the Greek? Far from it. On the contrary, he exhibits those passages which are said not to have existed in that gospel, but have been always found in the Greek. His reference here, therefore, must be to the Greek copy, and it is of this he says, *the evangelist quotes from the Hebrew, not from the Septuagint*. The observation, therefore, which Jerom here makes, affords no proof that the Nazarene gospel, even in his time, had the two first chapters of St. Matthew, any more than in the preceding ages.

It must be acknowledged, that the expression used by Jerom is very strong (“*ubicunque evangelista—veteris scripturæ testimonii utitur*”) and would lead his reader to conclude that Matthew, in the *right* gospel, *always* used the Hebrew, not the Greek scriptures. But, the known

* Apud Suiceri Thesaur, vol. I. p. 1231.

same, and even describes this gospel as having its beginning at the third chapter of the present copies of Matthew.*

To

known warmth of Jerom's temper might easily induce him to use expressions of too general a kind, when his real meaning was more restricted. And, with respect to several of the passages referred to, they are such as could not, from the *nature of the subject*, on which they are produced, be taken entirely either from the Hebrew or the Septuagint. Such are the following; Matt. iv. 10. viii. 17. xxvii. 9, 10. Others, also, without any necessity, but being quoted from memory only, differ from both: Matt. iii. 3. xii. 18—21. xxii. 37. But most are correspondent to the Hebrew. iv. 4, 6. (in which both the Hebrew and Septuagint agree) ver. 15, 16. (in which the Hebrew appears to be chiefly regarded) ix. 13. (in which, though the Septuagint is followed, the variation from the Hebrew is very trifling indeed) xxi. 5. (wholly from the Hebrew) xxi. 42. (both Heb. and LXX.) So xxii. 39, 44. xxiv. 15. (in which, as Jerom translates the corresponding passage in Dan. ix. 27. *Abominatio desolationis*, his Hebrew text must have been the same as the Greek of St. Matthew) and xxvii. 35. which agrees with the Hebrew and LXX. but is inauthentic, and does not even appear to have existed in

* Theolog. Repof. vol. IV. p. 277. Priestley's Hist. of Earl Op. vol. III. p. 213.

To these may be added another testimony, which, as it is drawn from fact, appears to have

in Jerom's time, five of the most ancient Mss. of the Vulgate being without it.

To which may be added, the two which he cites in the second chapter, ver. 15, 23. in which the Greek of St. Matthew agrees with the Hebrew, not with the LXX; though, with respect to the latter of these verses, the correspondence is imaginary only: Jerom supposing Ναζωραῖος to be taken from Isaiah xi. 1. where the Hebrew word נָצַר (Netzer) is used, which he, ignorantly, translates *Nazaræus*.

These instances show clearly, that Jerom refers here to the gospel of St. Matthew, as it existed in the Greek language, in his time, and not to the Ebionite gospel; of which, indeed, he takes no notice, in his commentary on St. Matthew, excepting in a few places quoted by Mr. Jones (Canon. Auth. p. 347—349) and in which he never uses the phrase, *ipsum Hebraicum*, when he speaks of that gospel, but *evangelium quod vocatur secundum Hebræos*, or the like, *plainly for the sake of distinction*.

There are only two passages, as far as I can find, which can be clearly shown to be taken from the LXX, ch. iv. 7. (but here the Hebrew differs very little) and xiii. 14, 15. So that Jerom might justly enough say, in a general sense, that Matthew quotes from the Hebrew,

have no small force attending it. Jerom, in his commentary on Matthew ii. 6. gives the

brew, but not from the LXX. Nor is it surprising that he should press the argument as far as he could; when it was a favourite point with him to magnify the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament, and depreciate the Greek, to which latter, it must be confessed, the primitive christians showed too great and too exclusive an attachment.

Indeed, the thing speaks for itself. For it would be no argument in favour of his point, that, in the *Hebrew* copy of the gospel, the evangelist makes his citations from the Hebrew scriptures; because he would not be likely to do otherwise; besides that Jerom's assertion would be still liable to contradiction, as he never pretends to produce a single passage from this gospel, in order to establish his assertion. But when he shows that, from the very text which was then in general use, it appears that the evangelist deduced his authorities in general from the Hebrew scriptures, the point he proposes is sufficiently proved; namely, that in what estimation so ever the Septuagint version might be held, the Hebrew was that to which recourse ought to be had, as the original and best authority.

As Jerom's words will show clearly the justness of the above remarks, I shall here subjoin them.

“ *Ut*

the plainest intimation that the Nazarene copy, in his possession, had not that part which relates to the miraculous conception.

Speaking of the words, *and thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda*, which, according to him, were read in the common copies then extant, *and thou Bethlehem in the land of JUDEA*, he makes the following remark ;

“ I am

“ *Ut adimpleretur quod dictum est Sc. Ex Ægypto vocavi filium meum.* Respondeant qui Hebræorum voluminum denegant veritatem, ubi hoc in LXX. legitur interpretibus. Quod cum non invenerint, nos eis dicemus, in Osea propheta scriptum, sicut et exemplaria probare possunt, quæ nuper edidimus.

“ *Et veniens, &c.* Si fixum de scripturis posuisset exemplum, nunquam diceret, quod dictum est per prophetas ; sed, simpliciter, quod dictum est per prophetam ; nunc autem pluraliter prophetas vocans, ostendit se non verba de scripturis sumpsisse, sed sensum. *Nazaræus, sanctus* interpretatur. Sanctum autem dominum futurum omnis scriptura commemorat. Possumus et aliter dicere, quod etiam eisdem verbis juxta Hebraicam veritatem in Esaia scriptum sit ; *exiet virga de radice Jesse, et NAZARÆUS de radice ejus conscendet.*”

Hieronym in Matthæum, C. II.

These observations of Jerom, as they appear to have no reference to the gospel according to the Hebrews,

G

but

“ I am of opinion, that the reading which
 “ came from the evangelist, was, as in the
 “ Hebrew itself (that is, the Hebrew of
 “ *Micab* from whom the prophecy was taken)
 “ *Judæ*, not *Judææ*.”*

On

but are taken from the Greek copy of St. Matthew, show plainly, that the same passages quoted by him in any other place, are taken also from the same Greek copy; and consequently determine, beyond doubt, that the words *in quo*, above-mentioned, must be applied to the Greek, or common text of St. Matthew, and were not intended by Jerom to be referred to the Ebionite Hebrew.

* I have taken this quotation from Dr. Mill's *Prolegomena*, § 42. whose words are, “ Age vero, an tale
 “ aliquod exemplar” (Nazarenum) “ penes se habuerit
 “ Hieronymus, vel unus ejus loquatur in Matthæum
 “ Commentarius. Ad cap. ii. v. 6. hæc habet; *Pu-*
 “ *tamus ab evangelista primum editum, ut in ipso Hebræo*
 “ (Michææ) *Judæ non Judææ*. Quorsum hæc conjec-
 “ tura, si Hebraicum illi foret ad manum ? ”

He adds other instances also to the same purpose; which show, indeed, plainly enough, that Jerom did not make as much use, as he might, of the Nazarene gospel; but afford no proof, that he was not possessed of it. Indeed Jerom's declarations that he actually had it,
 and

On which passage Dr. Mill observes, that Jerom could not have had in his possession the Nazarene gospel; for if he had, there would have been no occasion for a mere

and that he had even translated it into Latin and Greek, put this out of all manner of doubt.

Dr. Mill is mistaken in referring the phrase *in ipsa Hebræo* to the Hebrew of Micah; it rather refers to the Hebrew of the Old Testament in general, and to the book of Joshua in particular, as is evident from Jerom's own words, whose reference to Micah is not in this, but in the last sentence.

“ Putamus enim ab evangelista primum editum, sicut
“ in *ipso Hebraico* legimus, Judæ, non Judææ. Quæ
“ est enim aliarum gentium Bethlehem, ut ad distinc-
“ tionem hic Judææ poneretur? Judæ enim idcirco
“ scribitur, quia est et alia Bethlehem in Galilæa. Lege
“ *librum Jesu filii Naue*. Denique et in ipso testimonio
“ quod de Michææ prophetia scriptum est, ita habet, et
“ tu Bethlehem, terra Judæ.” (in Matt. c. ii.)

There are in Joshua two passages (xx. 7. xxi. 11.) in which mention is made of the mountain or hill country of Judah; and another (xix. 15.) in which Bethlehem (which must be the Galilean Bethlehem, referred to here) is spoken of as belonging to the lot of Zebulun. From these Jerom draws his remark; which, indeed, is

a mere conjecture And this would have been a perfectly just conclusion, if Jerom had not plainly declared the contrary, and confirmed this declaration by having actually had recourse to this gospel in more places

an erroneous one. For though Judea may, in common language, take in the whole of the land of Canaan, there is no reason why a particular district of it may not be called by the same name. Indeed in the Old Testament itself *Judah* is frequently used in both senses; why then may not Judea, which is nothing more than Judah, grecized, be so too? The passages of the Old Testament, in which Judah, the district so called, is found, are very numerous. Bethlehem-Judah is mentioned Judg. xvii. 7. xix. 1, and elsewhere.

That *in ipso Hebraico* can mean nothing but the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, is manifest also from the very last sentence, where *ipsum Hebraicum* must be supplied to give sense to the verb *habet*. *Michæas* would not serve the purpose; because the whole design of the passage is to show what was the reading of the *Hebrew*.

The above remarks of Dr. Mill, added to the observations to which this note refers, show that Dr. Priestley was mistaken in the idea, that Jerom's Nazarene copy contained the second chapter of Matthew. *Theol. Rep. ubi sup.* p. 287. Earl. Op. vol. III. p. 215.

than

than one.* In this, however, he is obliged to have recourse to conjecture only. What is the natural conclusion? Certainly this; that with respect to the verse in question, the copy of the Nazarene gospel which Jerom had, is totally silent. But does Jerom any where say that this copy was defective; and if it was, could he not have completed it from other copies?

The plain language of this father's observation, therefore, is, that the Nazarene gospel did not contain this supposed part of scripture. And consequently, whatever may be determined as to the difference of opinions between the Nazarenes and Ebionites with respect to the miraculous conception; the Nazarene gospel itself had not, even in the time of Jerom, the narrative of this event any more than that of the Ebionites.

Here is, then, an additional evidence, drawn from the nature of the facts them-

* See Jones on the Canonic. Auth. of the New Test. vol. I. p. 343—350,

selves, that the original gospel of St. Matthew did not contain those two first chapters, which are found in our present copies of the New Testament.

You will perhaps say; that I have been all along confounding together two different compositions, and supposing, what ought to be proved, that the Nazarene and Ebionite gospels were the same. As in this idea you are supported by so able a writer as Dr. Mill himself, it may not, perhaps, be improper to give some attention to his arguments on this head. These are,

1. That the authentic gospel of Matthew must have agreed with the present Greek version; whereas the Nazarene differed much from this version.

2. That Origen, who was acquainted with the Nazarene gospel, entertained a mean opinion of it.

And, 3. That Eusebius, in enumerating the acknowledged, doubtful, and spurious books of scripture, reckons the Nazarene gospel among the last of these.*

* Millii Prolegon. in Nov. Test. § 42—49.

To all which the reply is not very difficult.

For, 1. The question is not concerning the particular variations, but the general and fundamental agreement or diversity between the Nazarene gospel and that of St. Matthew; both of which might have been originally the same, though, in a length of time, corruptions, and these great ones, may have crept into either or both of them. Of these the most corrupt will be that of which there are the fewest copies; as in proportion to the number of various readings is the purity of the text which may be formed from them. Variations therefore in the Nazarene copy, not affecting the general tenour of the history, will prove nothing against its being originally from the hand of St. Matthew. The omission of the two first chapters, being the point in dispute, cannot be urged as any proof of this diversity. Indeed, the general agreement of the fathers in declaring the Nazarene gospel to be the same with that of Matthew, is a clear proof that though there were altera-

tions made in the former, they were not such as to destroy its identity.*

2. Though the authority of Origen must be confessed to be highly respectable, in most cases; yet it is not to be regarded, singly taken, as superior to that of all the other ecclesiastical writers united. Whatever opinion, therefore, he might form of the Nazarene gospel, it does not follow, that this must of necessity be a just opinion, especially when there are so many important authorities against him.

But it does not appear from the passage which Dr. Mill produces, that Origen entertained a mean opinion of this gospel. Origen's words, speaking of the story in the Nazarene gospel of the man who asked of Christ

* See Grotius in Matt. cap. i. p. 5—8. who regards the Nazarene, the Ebionite and Matthew's gospels as the same, though the two former he thinks to have been corrupted. The sentiments of many moderns on this gospel may be seen in Jones on the Canonic. Auth. vol. I. part II. chap. xxvi. and the *peculiarities* of it in chap. xxv.

what

what he should do to gain eternal life (Matt. xix. 16. &c.) are these ;

* *If any one chooses to make use of this (the Nazarene gospel) not as an authority, but as a proof (ad hominem, I suppose) of the question before him.* The whole meaning of which is, that he regards this gospel as of dubious authority ; which he might easily be supposed to do, on account of its numerous corruptions, without denying that it originally came from St. Matthew.

But what is the most solid answer to this objection is, that the Latin Homilies of Origen on Matthew are spurious, that they did not exist before the sixth century, and were the work of some person unknown.† What

* Si placet alicui, fuscipere illud non ad auctoritatem, sed ad manifestationem propositæ quæstionis. *Origen. Hom. 8. in Matth. Editionis Latinæ ap. Mill. Proleg. § 46.* The passage from Origen is more fully quoted in Jones, p. 111.

† See Dupin's *Bibliotheca Patrum*, third century, p. 119. *third column, and note 6.*

regard

regard is due to such authority may be easily judged:

3. Michaelis makes so complete a reply to Dr. Mill's observation on this head, and part of the preceding, that I shall have nothing more to do than to copy his remarks.*

“ Dr. Mill endeavours to show that the
“ gospel of the Nazarenes was quite a dif-

* Michaelis's Introd. Lectures to the New Test.
p. 222, 223.

Eusebius (says Dr. Mill, § 46.) ubi scripta novi Foederis recensuisset, primum *ὁμολογούμενα*, quatuor evangelia, acta, epistolas Pauli, priorem Joannis, ac priorem Petri, (quibus, inquit, adjungere licet, *εἰ γε φανεῖν*, Joannis Apocalypsin) tum et *ἀντιλεγόμενα*, de quibus aliquandiu dubitatum fuit in Ecclesia, epistolas Jacobi, Judæ, posteriorem Petri, secundam et tertiam Joannis; hisce demum *νοθα* subjungit, seu scripta ambiguae auctoritatis, Acta Pauli, Pastorem, Apocalypsin Petri, Barnabæ epistolam, et Apostolorum *διδασκας* dictas. In horum autem ordinem relatum dicit, idque à paucis quibusdam duntaxat, evangelium secundum Hebræos. Unde liquet, ex ipsius, et quidem ecclesiæ seculi sui sententia, tantum interfuisse inter Matthæi verum, et hoc *κατὰ Εβραῖως*, ut *ἀγρὲ* quidem huic locum vel inter scripturas *ἢ ἐνδιαθῆναι* assignaverint. See Euseb. Eul. Hist. lib. III. chap. xxv.

“ tinct

“ tinct piece from St. Matthew’s gospel, and
 “ that it was written jointly by some of the
 “ first christians at Jerusalem. He affirms
 “ that none but Epiphanius and Jerom have
 “ confounded them together, though Jerom
 “ writes, *à plerisque Matthæi authenticum vo-*
 “ *catur.* Dr. Mill appeals to Origen, who,
 “ he says, distinguishes the two gospels from
 “ each other. This father frequently made
 “ use of the gospel of the Nazarenes (See
 “ Jerom’s Catal. in voc. Jacobus) and yet
 “ he writes, that he had it from the report
 “ of the ancients, *ἐν * παραδοσει μαθόν*) that
 “ Matthew wrote in Hebrew. In answer to
 “ this, Dr. Mill says, that if Origen had the
 “ Hebrew gospel in his own hands, he need
 “ not learn this from tradition. But was not
 “ Origen obliged to learn from tradition that
 “ this was the genuine gospel of St. Mat-
 “ thew? He appeals moreover to Eusebius,
 “ who so often makes honourable mention

* All historical evidence comes under the denomina-
 tion *παραδοσις*. Campbell’s Pref. to Matthew’s Gospel,
 p. 9. (in Gospels v. 2.)

“ of

“ of the Hebrew gospel. Eusebius, in his
 “ account of the *νοθα* or spurious books, says,
 “ *among these some reckon the Hebrew gospel;*
 “ hence Dr. Mill concludes, that Eusebius
 “ esteemed it even *below* the spurious books;
 “ which is a strange perversion of his words:
 “ for it is much more natural to conclude,
 “ that he and the majority reckoned this
 “ gospel among the *authentic* books, since he
 “ mentions only *some* who esteemed it spuri-
 “ ous. But the words immediately pre-
 “ ceding might have assisted Mill in explain-
 “ ing Eusebius; *among these spurious pieces*
 “ *we are at liberty to place the revelation of*
 “ *John* (which he had before, agreeably to
 “ the opinion of others, reckoned among the
 “ *ὁμολογούμενα*) *which some reject, but others place*
 “ *among the ὁμολογούμενα.* Among these some
 “ also place the Hebrew gospel.* But Dr. Mill
 “ seems

* Eusebius indeed seems to express a favourable
 opinion of this gospel, if his own words are to be re-
 garded. *Ἡδὲ δὲ ἐν ἰσραὴλ (that is, νοθοῖς) τινες καὶ τὸ κατὰ*
Ἑβραίων εὐαγγέλιον κατελεξάν, Ὡς, ΜΑΛΙΣΤΑ ΕΒΡΑΙΩΝ

“ seems for once to have been less solicitous
 “ for truth than for arguments, whereby to
 “ defend the current opinion of divines.”

Father Simon* is of opinion that the Nazarene gospel contained the genealogy, because we are informed by Epiphanius, that Cerinthus and Carpocrates argued from the genealogy that *Jesus Christ was of the seed of Joseph and Mary.*

But this they might do by an *argumentum ad hominem* (which was not uncommon with the early christian writers) though they might not admit the genealogy to be authentic. But if they admitted its authenticity, it is plain that they knew nothing of those parts of the gospel in which the miraculous conception

ΟΙ ΤΟΝ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ ΠΑΡΑΔΕΞΑΜΕΝΟΙ ΧΑΙ-
 ΠΟΤΕΙ. The gospel according to the Hebrews; —
*in which those of the Hebrews who have received Christ
 take very great delight.* Euseb. ib.

* Hist. Critiq. du Nouv. Test. p. 72. See also
 Lardner's Works, vol. IX. p. 321, 322, 329. Com-
 pare Jones, vol. I. p. 219—223, especially p. 223,
note m.

is

is related ; because their argument that Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary, though justly deduced (and there is nothing in the genealogy to contradict this) would be overthrown by the very passages which immediately followed the genealogy. If therefore they admitted the latter, it is plain that they rejected the other. And what can be thought of a supposed portion of scripture, of which some rejected the whole, and others the most material parts ? This is certainly no favourable symptom of the authenticity of any part.*

I will

* This argument proceeds upon the supposition, that the interpretation here given by P. Simon is just ; but, I am convinced that this is by no means so ; a proof of which may be found in the passage itself.

—Epiphanius, after stating what was the beginning of the Ebionite gospel, and exhibiting its interpolated history of Christ's baptism, proceeds thus ; Ο μὲν γὰρ Κηρινθῶν καὶ Καρποκράης τῷ αὐτῷ χρωμένοι δὴθεν παρ' αὐτοῖς εὐαγγελίῳ, ἀπὸ τῆς ἀρχῆς τῆ κατὰ Ματθαίου εὐαγγελίας διὰ τῆς γενεαλογίας βεβλῶνται παρῖσαν, ἐκ σπέρματος Ἰωσήφ καὶ Μαρίας εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν. ΟΤΤΟΙ ΔΕ ἀλλὰ τίνα διανοοῦνται.

I will not pay your understanding so poor a compliment, as to suppose you capable of imagining that these mutilations were made by the Ebionites or Nazarenes, to serve their
OWN

διανοησαι. ΠΑΡΑΚΟΥΑΝΤΕΣ γὰρ τὰς παρὰ τῷ Ματθαίῳ γενεαλογίας, ἀρχοῦναι τὴν ἀρχὴν ποιεῖσθαι ὡς προεῖπον, λεγούτες, ὅτι ἐγενέτο ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου βασιλεως τῆς Ἰουδαίας.

The literal meaning of which is; *For Cerinthus and Carpocrates, though they use the same gospel with them (that is, with the Ebionites, whose gospel Epiphanius (inconsistently indeed) does not here acknowledge to be that of St. Matthew, but regards as spurious and mutilated [γενοθευμένῳ καὶ ἠκρωτηριασμένῳ] would prove from the beginning of Matthew's gospel (that is, not from the Ebionite, but the commonly received gospel of St. Matthew) by means of the genealogy, that Christ is of the seed of Joseph and Mary. But these men (the Ebionites) have other fancies; for HAVING CUT OFF THE GENEALOGIES in Matthew; they begin, as I said before, with the words, It came to pass in the days of Herod, king of Judæa.*

So that the difference, as here stated, between the Cerinthians and Carpocratians on the one side, and the Ebionites on the other, is, that the two former either added the genealogy to the Ebionite gospel, or argued from this genealogy, without admitting it as authentic,
in

own purposes. Corruptions, you well know, come from a different quarter. The heretics indeed have been *accused*, but the *convicted* parties are certainly the *orthodox*. On which account, I confess, that if I had two copies of the New Testament set before me, in order to decide which of them had the greatest probability of having originally

in favour of their own principles. This passage, therefore, instead of proving that this gospel contained the genealogy, demonstrates the contrary, and represents the Cerinthians and Carpocratians as, at the utmost, only annexing to it a part which the Ebionites universally rejected.

Whatever, therefore, be determined as to the meaning of another passage of Epiphanius (*Hæres.* 28, N. 5.) which has given occasion to opposite interpretations (*Jones*, vol. I. p. 222 ; and *Lardner*, vol. IX. p. 322, *note*) it is clear from this before us, that the Ebionite or Nazarene gospel did not contain the chapters in question. I cannot, however, be of Dr. Lardner's opinion that this latter passage proves that the Cerinthians admitted the genealogy ; I rather think, with Mr. Jones, that it leads to a contrary conclusion, as will appear by properly filling up the ellipses in it.

Xpoustan

ginally come from the sacred writers; I durst venture to say, the chances would be that the heretical copy was the genuine one. It is well known that the orthodox fathers *destroyed* the writings of the heretics. If the cause was good, which these fathers laboured to support, what occasion for all this artifice and concealment? The heretical party acted in a contrary manner. They destroyed no copies, but left the argument to stand upon

Χρῆσαι γὰρ τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον, ἀπὸ μέρους, καὶ οὐχὶ ὅλῳ. Ἀλλὰ [τὸ ἐστὶ] διὰ τὴν γενεαλογίαν τὴν ἐνσαρκίαν [ὅπερ ἐστὶ τὸ μέρος τοῦ ἀποκοπέν].

They use the gospel according to Matthew, in part, but not the whole. But [this is] because of the genealogy which contains the incarnation [which is the part cut off by them].

If this be, as appears natural, the sense of the passage, that which I have affixed to the other must be the only just one; and the Cerinthians and Carpocratians will be found to have admitted no more of the supposed gospel of St. Matthew than the Nazarenes or Ebionites. But this is difficult to be determined, and cannot be more than a matter of probable conjecture.

its own proper footing. On which side do you think the presumptive evidence lies?*

* See Lardner's History of Heretics, book I. passim, in which the learned author shows, that it is difficult to define heresy; that many mistakes have been committed by those who have published accounts of heresies; that heretics have often been treated with great acrimony; that they have been greatly calumniated; that the ancient heretics believed the UNITY of GOD; that they made great use of the SCRIPTURES, though some of them used also Apocryphal books; (but, says Dr. Lardner, "the catholics themselves are not free from this charge:" indeed, "christians of *all sorts* were guilty of this fraud"); that they respected the apostles and apostolic tradition; that the ancient heresiarchs were generally men of letters; that heretics were *moderate towards those who differed from them*; and that pernicious consequences were charged upon them, as resulting from their opinions, though they did not themselves admit these consequences.

Concerning Carpocrates and Cerinthus in particular, see Lardner, *ibid.* B. II. C. iii. iv. I cannot help expressing my surprise that Dr. Priestley should seem to credit the idle story of St. John and Cerinthus, told by Irenæus (see Priestley's Hist. of the Christ. Church, vol. I. p. 216.) especially as it had been so well refuted by Dr. Middleton (Tracts, p. 107, &c.) See also Lardner, vol. II. p. 86, 87, *note*.

Though

Though I regard the arguments already adduced, as sufficient to prove the point which I have been endeavouring to establish, yet I cannot help suggesting to you some other considerations, which appear to me to add no little strength to them.

It is very unaccountable, that so numerous a body as the Nazarene christians, who existed in the time of the apostles, should be suffered to lie so universally under an error, in a point of such importance, when, in another, the apostles took so much pains to correct their mistakes.* Is it to be supposed, that the same zeal for the cause of true christianity, which led its first teachers to prohibit the imposition of Jewish rites on the gentile converts, would not have actua-

* It appears that the heresy of the Gnostics, was frequently animadverted upon by the apostles. Can it be thought, if the Ebionite opinions were heretical, that these would not have been equally taken notice of; especially since these two heresies must have been the only ones existing in the apostolic times? See Priestley's History of Early Opinions, vol. I. book I. ch. iv. v.

ted them to endeavour the removal of every other erroneous idea? But since they do not appear to have made any such attempt, though they could not be unapprised of the sentiments which the Jewish christians entertained, it may be fairly presumed that there was no difference of opinion between the apostles and them in the case in question, but that they were both equally disbelievers of the miraculous conception. If the Nazarene gospel existed at any time before the death of the apostles, they certainly, had it been spurious, would have taken some opportunity of showing a disapprobation of it, in their epistles, at least, if not in a more public manner. And though it might not be extant at the period of the council at Jerusalem (mentioned Acts xv.); yet the opinions existed; and it was by all means requisite, that the prevalence of these should be stopped, before they had received the sanction of a gospel, to which these christians looked up with a peculiar veneration. At least, it might be expected that, on its publication,

lication, with which the apostles could not be unacquainted, their best efforts would be exerted against it.*

Mr. Jones indeed says,† that Paul plainly alludes to this gospel in his epistle to the Galatians (ch. i. 6.). In which passage, (without remarking the anachronism,‡ into which this learned writer has fallen) I do not see any thing to lead to this idea. Our common English version expresses itself thus;

“ *I marvel that ye are so soon removed*
“ *from him that called you into the grace of*

* Several of the apostolic writings were so late as the years 64 and 68; and St. John’s epistles, not earlier than 80 or 90. If the Nazarene gospel was an imposture, it is strange that nothing should be said of it in these writings.

† Method for the Canon. vol. I. p. 31 and 332.

‡ The epistle to the Galatians was written probably about the year 52 or 53. Dr. Mill and Fabricius date it at 58. (Lardner, vol. VI. p. 305, &c.) The Nazarene gospel is placed by Mr. Jones, A. D. 67 or 68, as mentioned above.

“ Christ, unto another gospel; which is not
“ another.”

St. Paul, however, is not speaking here of the gospel as a *composition*; but, as that tenor of preaching which he had continually preserved among the Galatians; and from which they were then fallen into a scheme, not indeed different from his, though debased by errors and corruptions. So that, even in this sense, the apostle has no necessary reference to any written gospel, but most obviously to a system of false opinions.

But I do not think that this version is right. The following, which is a literal translation, seems to me to give the proper meaning of the apostle in this place:

I wonder that ye are so soon removed from Christ who called you by grace (or favour) to another gospel (or system of doctrines, meaning that of the Judaizing teachers, which is contrasted with the words by grace) which is*

* Or removing: *μελατιδεσθαι*: present tense. I have altered the punctuation of these verses; a liberty which I suppose no one will object to.

nothing

nothing else, but that there are some who disturb you, &c.

According to this interpretation, no reference can be made to any gospel whatever, considered either as a history, or written system of facts or doctrines.

With respect to supposed absurdities and corruptions in the Nazarene gospel, though the observations already made, seem sufficient to show that there is no reason to conclude that this was not originally the gospel of St. Matthew; it may not be improper to employ a few remarks on the most probable origin of interpolations; by which means we may account for those which have crept into the gospel of the Nazarenes.

I can hardly suppose, that the first copies of the New Testament, were written in the same elegant manner as many of the Mss. which are now extant. The Alexandrian, or the Cambridge, for instance, must have been the effect of too much time and labour, to have been one of those which fell into the hands of common christians. It seems most

probable, that, as soon as any book of the New Testament was made public, every christian, who was capable of writing, would hastily take a copy for his own private use, or, perhaps, for that of the church, over which he presided. At the same time that he did this, he would insert also such observations, or annex such facts, as were delivered, either by the writers themselves, or by such persons as were capable of explaining the difficulties which presented themselves, in reading or transcribing. These he would, without hesitation, insert, some in the margin, and others in the body of the work itself, as they suited his purposes. Far from imagining, that he was destroying the purity of the text, he would regard his copy (what it would really be, with respect to himself, and those whom he was appointed to teach) as highly improved, and rendered much more useful.

But what a variety of corruptions would this give occasion to? Though the copyist himself, and those with whom he was immediately connected, would run no hazard
of

of confounding the text and the additions; yet posterity would suffer greatly in this case. Especially, as from the circumstances of christians in the early ages, there was little opportunity of comparing their copies together, these errors must continue and spread, according to the degree of carelessness or ignorance in succeeding transcribers.

This accounts for the numerous corruptions which the fathers give us as the actual words of scripture,* and establishes a principle, which would otherwise seem a paradox; that we have now a more correct text of the New Testament, than has ever appeared since the destruction of the Autographs of the apostles and evangelists themselves. These, indeed, would soon be lost; whatever care the early christians might take for their preservation. As they had no common

* How corrupt a copy of the Old and New Testament Justin Martyr had, may be judged from the quotations he makes in his Apologies and Dialogue. See p. 62, 63, 64, 297, 298, and elsewhere, of his Works, edit. Par. 1615.

repository, in which to lay up these valuable monuments, these would naturally share in the common lot of their other possessions, and be destroyed by their persecutors. And I am persuaded, that if the copies which were taken, had not been almost innumerable, (compared, at least, with those of other books in those times) we should not have had more than a very incomplete portion of the scriptures at present.

Jerom observes,* that the old Latin version of the New Testament, was, in his time, so exceedingly corrupt, that there were almost as many diversities of text, as of copies. Though I look upon this as an exaggeration, yet it may well be applied to the Nazarene gospel. It existed amongst a neglected sect; was written in a language generally unknown; and received few or no corrections by collation. Is it surprising, that it should at last be full of errors; and that the original text

* Si Latinis exemplaribus fides est adhibenda; respondeant, quibus: *tot enim sunt exemplaria pene quot codices.* Hieronym. Præf. in Evangelist. ad Damasum.

should

should be in a manner buried amidst the additions made to it; additions made amongst an artless, uninstructed set of men, who would naturally receive, without examination, the copies put into their hands, with all those explanations and undigested facts which were annexed by the first and later transcribers?

You may perhaps urge, that I here carry the argument farther than any facts will warrant; and ask me, whether there are any Mss. of the New Testament so corrupt as the Nazarene gospel must have been in the time of Jerom? To which I frankly reply, no, I do not know of any. I am convinced that not even the Cambridge Mss. with all its interpolations, is as corrupt as the Nazarene gospel was.

But what is the reason? The Cambridge MS. is not so old as the time of Jerom, by whom the text of the New Testament was restored to a great degree of purity. And yet even this MS. is full of interpolations. I think I could produce such a number from

from the Acts of the Apostles only, as would surprise some readers. But this is a MS. which appears not to have been hastily written, like the more early ones; it is plainly the result of care and labour; and was most probably collated with several others.

The Alexandrian is still more correct than this, and for the same reason. Both this and the Cambridge were evidently designed for public use; they were consequently expensive, and cannot be drawn into comparison with those which christians of earlier ages were obliged to copy as they could. And yet these two Mss. (and the same may be said of every other) are so full of corruptions as would appear to some incredible and even impossible.* If these therefore, with

all

* In the Alexandrian MS. there is a most remarkable corruption, in John xix. 40. where, instead of the common and true reading, *then took they the body of JESUS*, this MS. reads *the body of GOD* (θεου). This is peculiar to the Alexandrian, and cannot have proceeded from accident, but may be fairly ascribed to the prevailing bigotry

all the advantages which could be gained from a collation of various copies, are yet so incorrect, why should it be a matter of wonder that any copy of the Nazarene gospel, which had scarcely any of these advantages, should be still more so?

By the collation of various copies, a true text is established. Will any one say, that if this had been done in Jerom's or Origen's time, with respect to the copies of the Nazarene gospel, the genuine text of St. Matthew would not have been the result? If Jerom could see, under the numerous corruptions which existed in his copy of this gospel, the original composition of the evangelist; would not the comparison of a second,

bigotry of the times, which gave occasion to frequent forgeries. This MS. has also *Scholia mixed with the text itself*. (Mill. Proleg. § 1341.)

The Alexandrian MS. was not written, as is generally believed, in the fourth century by Thecla, an Egyptian lady, but, at the earliest, towards the end of the fifth century. (See Wettstein Proleg. p. 11. and Mill. § 1338.)

Enograb

have

have enabled him to discover this still more clearly? And would not therefore the examination of more copies lead to a complete and perfect conviction of the identity of these gospels? Or can we suppose, that Symmachus, who was a learned and accurate commentator, and yet an Ebionite, had not obtained, by careful collation, such a copy?

It appears, therefore, that objections drawn from corruptions in the Ebionite or Nazarene gospel, as it existed in the time of Epiphanius or Jerom, are of no weight against its being originally from the hand of St. Matthew, unless it can be shown, contrary to fact, that such corruptions never arise in the course of transcribing.

Corrupt, however, as the copies may be, thus much may be concluded; that if any particular part of scripture was not found in them at any one given time, it was found at no time. The story of the miraculous conception therefore, not appearing in the Nazarene gospel in the time of Epiphanius or Jerom, notwithstanding this gospel had undergone

dergone so many corrupt additions ; it may be fairly presumed, to have been wanting at its earliest period, and consequently to have never made a part of it.

- * I am apt to think that this reasoning will appear indisputable, if you consider that Mss. never lose, but, on the contrary, always gain, in transcribing. Witness many interpolations in the New Testament itself. The omissions from negligence are confined to small clauses or sentences, but never extend to such large portions as the narrative of the miraculous conception.

There is also a great difference between the evidence afforded by an interpolated copy, in favour of particular *readings*, and that which it affords in favour of particular *omissions*. As the authority of the former is diminished, in proportion to the number of the interpolations, that of the latter increases, in the same proportion. So the Cambridge MS. is of no authority as to any reading in which it differs from all other Mss. but, with respect to omissions, it is of great authority.

thority. The same argument, therefore, which would lead to a rejection of the authority of the Nazarene gospel in peculiar readings or additions, would, in the case of such omissions as that of the miraculous conception, be of great force; and, when taken in connexion with the circumstance, that a whole people admitted this gospel earlier than every other sect of christians, and that these last themselves, though enemies to the Nazarene sentiments, yet regarded the same gospel as having a just claim to authenticity;—it appears to me, I confess, irresistible.

It would be thought needless to remark, that it appears from these considerations, there must have been a *variety of copies* of this gospel among the Jewish christians; were it not for a singular inaccuracy of expression, by which you lead your readers to entertain the idea that there was one copy only, belonging to the whole sect.

In reply to Dr. Priestley's supposition, that the gospels of Matthew and Luke might have

have been originally without the introductions which contain the account of the miraculous conception, you say, "when we reflect that it---- has no other evidence to support it than that of the *single Hebrew copy* of the gospel of the Ebionites, the reader will have no difficulty in determining which of the two schemes of reconciling the evangelists, his or mine, is preferable."*

Do you, then, really believe that the Ebionites had *one copy only*? I cannot suppose that an imagination so destitute of all probability could ever seriously enter your mind. Besides those copies which are taken notice of by Origen, Epiphanius, and Eusebius, Jerom himself mentions two, one of which was at Cæsarea, and the other he had received from the Nazarenes at Beræa. Can it be thought that the other churches of the Ebionites had none? indeed, can it be supposed that even private individuals were universally without any?

* Nisb. on the Mir. Concep. p. 32.

I

I should

I should not have mentioned this hasty assertion, if you had not actually built an argument upon it. The single copy of the Ebionite gospel is, according to your representation, opposed by Dr. Priestley to the numerous Mss. of the New Testament, which all agree in relating the miraculous conception.

But if the fact be, that there were several copies of this gospel, the whole foundation of your argument is subverted, unless the greater number of concurrent copies is always a proof of the authenticity of a reading. And this is the case, provided all copies are of equal authority. But the *antiquity* of copies is the principal point to be regarded. And the evidence of two or three early Mss. will weigh very strongly against the united testimony of numbers of those which are of a much later date.

Now this is precisely the point on which the argument relating to the miraculous conception turns. If the Greek copies of St. Matthew's gospel are of earlier date than the

the Hebrew gospel of the Ebionites, the authenticity of the latter necessarily gives way: but if, as is now generally acknowledged, the Greek is a mere version of an older Hebrew copy, and this copy is the same as the Ebionitish gospel was originally, the evidence of all the Greek Mss. in the world will be nothing against it. And it should be always remembered, that where the question is not concerning the number, but the authenticity of Mss. (which is the question here) it may be said as easily, and as much to the purpose, the *single Greek copy of the Gentile christians*, as *the single Hebrew one of the Ebionites*;—and, as the former can prove nothing against the authenticity of the Greek; the latter will do as little against that of the Hebrew. The question must be determined by other arguments; some of which I have already laid before you; and others may be gained from the authors referred to.

You tell us, Sir,* that Dr. Priestley has employed several pages to prove that the

* p. 86, note, Mir. Concept.

Gnostics rejected the doctrine of the miraculous conception. Would it not have been more accurate, to have said, that Dr. Priestley has given the most indubitable proof of this?*

The passage indeed which you quote, is not adduced to call in question the fact itself, but to suggest an inconsistency.† Indeed, you do not pay the least attention to the argument which Dr. Priestley draws from it. And yet it is not of that insignificance which would warrant the total neglect with which you have treated it. The substance of it is this. The Gnostics were the earliest sect of heretics. The ideas, which they entertained of Christ's nature, were very high. To these ideas, the belief of the miraculous conception would have afforded no small support. But they had no such belief. Therefore the

* Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 280—283. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 91—98. See also vol. I. book I. ch. iii. § 5. Dr. Priestley here means the *early* Gnostics.

† Theol. Rep. p. 246. Hist. p. 10, 11.

doctrine

doctrine had no existence, at the time of their first appearance.

This is nearly Dr. Priestley's manner of reasoning.* "The earliest and most distinguished of the Gnostics agreed with the ancient Unitarians, in disbelieving the miraculous conception. Now, what could bring persons so opposite to each other as the Unitarians and Gnostics are always represented to have been to agree in this one thing, but such historical evidence as was independent on any particular system of christian faith? and which, in the case of the Gnostics, must have been so strong, as to overbear the natural influence of their system?"

Now, though I might, with no small degree of justice, ask you, Sir, why all this argument is left unnoticed by you (for you do not attempt any where to reply to it) yet I shall content myself with considering the use which you make of Dr. Priestley's remark.

* Theol. Rep. p. 282, 283.

“ Dr. Priestley (you say) has employed
 “ several pages to prove that the Gnostics
 “ rejected the doctrine of the miraculous
 “ conception, — *which fact he thinks is more*
 “ *unfavourable to its credibility, than the dis-*
 “ *belief of it by any of the Catholic Christians,*
 “ *Jews, or Gentiles; because this doctrine*
 “ *would have suited remarkably well with their*
 “ *other principles.*” On which you remark,
 “ How to reconcile this language with the
 “ assertion of our author, that the doctrine
 “ itself connects equally well, or equally ill,
 “ with any particular hypothesis concerning
 “ the nature of Christ, I am utterly at a loss
 “ to say !”

But where the inconsistency lies, I confess
 does not appear to me. Nothing can be
 more evident, than that the belief or disbelief
 of the miraculous conception has no *necessary*
connexion with any system of opinions, whe-
 ther trinitarian, arian, or socinian, respecting
 the person of Christ; because each of these
 systems may subsist, with or without this be-
 lief. But when a system is formed, with an
 express

express design of magnifying the person or dignity of Christ, it cannot be said that any particular opinion concerning him which has a relation, however remote, to this system, is perfectly *indifferent*. The existence of a system, and the favourableness of a particular opinion to it, are two very different things. If the system can stand without the opinion, the denial of such opinion does not affect it. But if the opinion existed at the time when the system was formed, and moreover had a *direct tendency to support it*, it can hardly be supposed that those who embraced the system, would be without the opinion. If, therefore, the opinion was not entertained by them, it may be justly concluded that the opinion had, at that time, no existence.

This is precisely the case with the Gnostics. The disbelief of the miraculous conception, considered in itself, would no more affect their system than any other; nor, of consequence, would the belief of it; but if the belief existed in the time of the Gnostics, it is most probable, since it is well calculated to

support the high ideas which they entertained of Jesus Christ, they would have entertained it. They did not entertain it. Therefore it had no existence in their days. Where is the inconsistency between this and the preceding paragraph ?*

You call Dr. Priestley's method of reconciling the evangelists a trifle ; † and, I confess that, according to the manner in which you have exhibited it, there does not appear to be such weight in it as might have been expected from so able a reasoner. But this arises from your not having given the whole of his argument. Permit me therefore to supply the deficiency from Dr. Priestley himself.

“ In comparing the four gospels ‡ (says “ he) we cannot but be struck with the remarkable difference between those of

* See Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 246 and 280.

† Nisb. on Mir. Con. p. 31.

‡ Theol. Rep. p. 285, 286. Hist. of Op. vol. IV. p. 100—102.

“ Matthew

“ Matthew and Luke, and those of Mark
 “ and John.” —“ Neither of the latter giving
 “ the least hint of a miraculous conception.”
 —“ With respect to John, it may indeed be
 “ said, that, as he knew that Matthew and
 “ Luke had recorded the circumstances of
 “ the miraculous conception, he had no occa-
 “ sion to do it. But what shall we say with
 “ respect to Mark ? If he was an epitomizer
 “ of Matthew, as some have supposed,* but
 “ of which I own I have seen no sufficient
 “ evidence, how came he to leave out the

* If credit is to be given to the German Reviews, referred to in the Analytical Rev. vol. VI. p. 355 Dr. Griesbach has demonstrated, in a pamphlet published since the appearance of Dr Priestley's History of Early Opinions, that Mark copied his gospel from Matthew and Luke jointly. If this be true, his omission of the miraculous conception will amount to a convincing proof that the account of this event did not exist in the original copies either of Matthew or Luke. Michaelis also regards Mark as a copyist from Matthew in many instances, and assigns a very insufficient reason for his omission of the miraculous conception. See his Lectures, p. 229—231.

“ whole

“ whole of the two first chapters? And if he
 “ was, as I think most probable, an original
 “ writer, how came he to give no account
 “ at all of the miraculous conception, on the
 “ supposition that he really knew of it? * He
 “ could not tell that any other person of
 “ equal credit would write the history; and,
 “ therefore, as he did undertake it, he would
 “ certainly insert in it whatever he thought
 “ to be of principal importance. But it is
 “ of such a nature, that no person, believing
 “ it to be true, ever did or could consider it
 “ as of no importance. It was a singular and
 “ most extraordinary measure in Divine Pro-
 “ vidence, and could not but be considered
 “ as having some great object and end,
 “ whether we should be able to discover it or

* Dr. Priestley does not place his argument here in
 as strong a light as it is capable of. For Mark does not
 merely *omit* the miraculous conception, but expressly
 calls the event of Christ's baptism, the *beginning* of the
 gospel of Jesus Christ; a phrase which certainly he
 would not have used, if he had known of any other im-
 portant event concerning Jesus Christ prior to this.

“ not,

“not. It was therefore such a fact as no
“historian could overlook; and it may, there-
“fore, be presumed, that Mark had either
“never heard of it, or did not believe it.”

I cannot help thinking, Sir, that these observations demanded a particular consideration. You perhaps may think that sufficient attention has been paid to them, in the general remark you make,* that the omission of such facts, in one or more of the evangelical histories, as are taken notice of in others, affords no argument against these facts. And I agree with you, that this, in many instances, is a just observation. But such a fact as the miraculous conception, which, if true, makes so important an article in the history of Christ, is certainly most materially different from every other which you have mentioned. The omission of any of these, even of the ascension of Christ itself, can have no effect to weaken our belief of the great and fundamental points of the gospel (particularly it does not affect Christ's resurrection) nor

* Mir. Concept. p. 22—30.

does

does it lessen our opinion of the dignity of his person; but this, which at once stamps his character as more than human, could never have been omitted by any historian of Christ's life who believed it, and was sensible of the influence it must have on the ideas which ought to be entertained concerning him.

Were there any other event in the history of Christ, which necessarily led to the belief of his miraculous conception, your argument from omissions of facts in the evangelical histories would hold in full force; but as no such event occurs, there is all the reason in the world, why none of the evangelists should omit it. With respect to the other events, the messiahship of Jesus is sufficiently established without them; but the omission of this necessarily degrades him, from his exalted nature, to that of a man in every respect like ourselves. As this must be a matter of high importance with the sacred historians, they could not any of them have possibly

possibly omitted such a circumstance, had they either known or believed it.

You, indeed, suppose with Dr. Lardner, that the title of *Son of God** applied to Christ implies that his birth was miraculous. But, as the whole evidence which he brings for this is that very part of scripture which is the subject of dispute, no stress can be laid upon it. Besides, if the writers of the New Testament had designed, by this title, to convey the notion of Christ's miraculous birth, they certainly would have accompanied it, in some instances, at least, with such expressions, as should have clearly marked out this application. That they have not, affords no weak presumption of their ignorance of the miraculous conception: as this, if entertained by them, would have distinguished Christ as the son of God, in a more proper sense of the words, than any which they have actually suggested. And you cannot be insensible, that they have given Christ this title, in various senses, which they have

* Mir. Con. p: 29, note.

clearly

clearly pointed out and ascertained themselves. If the miraculous conception was one of those which they intended, it is singular indeed, that they should have given no intimation of it in any part of their writings, whether historical or epistolary.

And now, Sir, to come to the passage which you have actually quoted from Dr. Priestley. "If we only take away the two first chapters of Matthew and Luke, and change a very few words in the verses that follow them, we shall find very proper beginnings for them both, and exactly corresponding to that natural and simple one of Mark."

On this you remark, that Dr. Priestley acknowledges, he must *change* a very few words in the verses which follow; and you add archly,* "this is an easy method of getting rid of what are called, incumbrances on the christian scheme."

To the latter of these remarks, I can only say, that the method which Dr. Priestley

* Mir. Con. p. 32.

here uses, is the same as that to which we have recourse, in determining the authenticity of passages found in the works of any ancient authors. Are these passages agreeable to the times and circumstances to which they are said to refer? If they are, there is every reason to conclude that they are genuine; if not, the contrary must be the conclusion. The design of Dr. Priestley's arguments is to show that they are inconsistent with the times and circumstances referred to. Their inauthenticity is therefore the direct conclusion; and, of consequence, whether a *very few words*, or a great number, must be changed, in order to restore the supposed true text, signifies nothing as to the argument on the inauthenticity of the passages to be expunged; unless it could be proved that interpolators never change the text, to which they join the spurious passages. But this, I suppose, no one will be hardy enough to assert. To alter, therefore, those clauses where the interpolation most probably ends, and the genuine text begins, in order to make up a regular history,

history, though the effect of mere conjecture, as far as the words only are concerned (the *general sense* of the genuine text remaining *unviolated*) is, when the original reading has been lost by means of the interpolation, the only method to which recourse can be had; and may be justified on principles of the most solid criticism.

But to make it appear that Dr. Priestley's ideas in this case are not so very deserving of the appellation of *trifle*, as those who are unacquainted with critical studies may imagine; I think I may venture to say that there is no need to change even a single word in either of the gospels of Matthew or Luke, in order to find proper beginnings to them, when the story of the miraculous conception is taken away.

The gospel of St. Matthew appears to me to have its beginning at the word *ἦν* (*came*) in the first verse of the third chapter. So that, like that of St. Mark, after the title, *the gospel according to Matthew* (which, perhaps, was also originally *the gospel of Jesus Christ*

Christ, according to Matthew *) these words should follow, *John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, &c.* And this remarkable resemblance affords a strong presumption that the gospel of St. Mark is here copied partly from that of St. Matthew.

The third chapter of Luke has all the appearance of the regular commencement of a narrative; and may, with as much propriety, follow the fourth verse of the first chapter, as the first chapter itself. The first and second chapters, therefore, have all the appearance of interpolation. The

* This is confirmed by Grotius, who says expressly, "Vetus inscriptio non habuit *nude euangelium*, sed "*euangelium Iesu Christi*, ut est initio Marci; quia nimirum argumentum libri erat ut jam diximus, *κηρυγμα* "Christi; ideo non potuit scriptoris nomen poni patrio "casu." *Græc. in Matt. p. 5.*

The words *Son of God* in vs. 11 in Mark i. 1. seem to have been interpolated; at least (though they occur in all the Mss. of the New Test.) they are thrice omitted by Origen, and thrice by Jerom; (vid. Griesb. in loc.) and do not occur in some MS. Scholia of Chrysostom on this place found at Moscow. (Vid. Matthæi in loc.)

K

connecting

connecting particle also,* which is rendered *now* in our common translation, at the beginning of the third chapter, is not found in some very ancient Mss; so that it seems, the

* The beginning of Luke's third chapter, according to the common reading is, *Ev tēi δε, &c.* But *δε* is not read in Wolff's second, which is a very ancient MS. nor in five others, three of which are each seven hundred years old, nor in the Latin copies; by which I apprehend Wettstein means those Latin copies of the New Testament which were prior to Jerom.

Marcion's copy of Luke certainly began at the third chapter; concerning which see Theolog. Rep. vol. IV. p. 286, 287. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 103, 104. Compare vol. I. p. 236. Of Marcion and his opinions, a large account is given by Lardner in his History of Heretics, book II. chap. x. (works vol. IX.) who also clears Marcion from the charges brought against him by Epiphanius.

The following observations of Dr. Wall, of whose orthodoxy no doubt was ever entertained, add no inconsiderable force to the foregoing remarks, and contain a concession, which reflects honour upon his candour and judgment.

“It appears from Epiphanius (Hær. 29.) that the “Ebionites’ copy of St. Matthew had nothing of the
“two

the connexion which this chapter has with the preceding, *was made for the purpose of supporting the interpolation itself.*

It is a circumstance which has struck me greatly, and perhaps may have been noticed by others, that, on supposition of the authenticity of the two first chapters of Matthew and Luke, there is a strange and unaccountable gap in the life of Christ. Why should his extraordinary birth alone be so much taken notice of, and all the subsequent events, except one, his conversation with the Jewish doctors, be totally passed over? If the early part of his life was so remarkable, must we not naturally suppose, that (allow-

“two first chapters, but began at the third, with the
 “baptism of John [as Luke’s also did]. *If credit might*
be given to those Hebrew copies, the GREATEST DIFFI-
CULTY that is in ANY of the books of the New Test.
would be REMOVED. And it is plain, that St. Mark,
 “(who in all other places, follows the method of St.
 “Matthew) begins with St. John’s baptism. And so
 “does St. John, after a short account of our Saviour’s
 “divine nature.” Wall’s Critical Notes, p. 4. quoted
 by Bowyer, Conject. on the New Test. Matt. iii. 1.

ing his childhood to be such as might be passed over in silence) the transactions of his life, from the age of twenty, at least, to that of his public ministry, could not but afford us many important and interesting circumstances. Indeed this is peculiarly one of the most striking periods, especially to those, who needed most the influence of Christ's example, the younger part of mankind.

That all this should be passed by, is such a singularity as does not occur in the life of any other eminent person; and is hardly consistent with the evangelical history, supposing Christ's miraculous birth to have made a part of it. Those writers, who had, with so much minuteness, related the events of his infancy, would most certainly have collected, with the utmost care, the transactions between this and his entrance upon public life; and if they had not related every event, they would, at least, have given the world some of the most remarkable ones. But on all this, there is a deep silence through the whole of the evangelical history. Does not this

this cast a suspicion on the prior events, and lead to the conclusion, that if there was nothing worthy of particular narration in the youthful days of Christ, neither was there any thing in his childhood or infancy?

It is also an observation of no small importance, that the first words of the third chapter of Matthew, as our present copies exhibit them, contain a direct falsehood. *In THESE DAYS came John the Baptist, &c.* In what days, but in the days referred to in the two former chapters? But the time of Christ's baptism was about thirty years after the events related in these chapters. So that either John was much older than Christ, or the expression here, which naturally means *while these events happened which are related in the former chapter*, must be confined to this signification, at the *end of the time*, when these events happened. If the former be the meaning, John the Baptist was many years older, or at least had begun his ministry much earlier, than Jesus Christ. But this is inconsistent with the account which St. Luke is supposed

supposed to give; who tells us that Christ was not six months younger than John the Baptist, and that both of them began their ministry nearly at the same time. The consequence of this will be, that the credibility of both these histories will be affected. And if the latter be the meaning of the words, this will be such a sense as is warranted by no similar expression either in the evangelical or profane history. We are, therefore, reduced to this alternative; either to give up the credibility of both these evangelical historians, or to coincide with the former conclusions, that the history of the miraculous conception never came from the hands of the sacred writers. The latter being the most probable, of necessity determines my judgment.

It is well known that there were accounts of Christ's infancy published very early; though later than the four gospels. It is also certain that there were some of the Nazarenes who believed the miraculous conception. Did not they take their ideas from these accounts,

accounts, which they believed to be authentic, and ascribed to the evangelists? Is it not probable, therefore, that these supposed gospels of St. Matthew and Luke might be delivered to the descendants of these christians, and thus generally come into the hands of the Gentile christians? For even in Justin's time, there were many who did not believe the miraculous conception, and consequently did not admit these introductory chapters, as the work of the evangelists to whom they are ascribed. As these chapters are so easily separated from the rest of the history, not only without injury, but with real advantage to it; is not this a strong mark of interpolation; and ought not this separation to be made, at least, in such a manner as to show that they are of very doubtful authority? *

Though it appears plain to me, therefore, that the story of the miraculous conception was not in the original copies of St. Mat-

* Dr. Priestley suggests a similar idea, Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 286, 287. Hist of Earl. Op. vol. IV, p. 102, 103.

thew, the frequent references to it, and express citations of passages relating it, in Justin Martyr,* afford great probability that it must have been regarded by some as part of the authentic gospel, perhaps before his time. Agreeably to which Dr. Priestley observes, † that “it is *almost certain* that the story of the “miraculous conception was in the received “gospels of Matthew and Luke, in the time “of Justin Martyr.” On which you make the following remark, which I cannot reconcile with candour. “Why he ‡ (Dr. “Priestley) should use the dubious expression, *almost certain*, we are not informed; “although it appears to have been a *duty* “which he owed to the public, to give his reasons for a *suspicion* IF HE HAD ANY; as his

* Just. Martyr. Op. (in Apol.) p. 68, 72, 73, 74, 75, 83, 96. (in Dial:) 241, 262, 264, 267, 269, 274, 280, 286, 290, 291, 292, 293, 297, 301, 303, & *alibi*.

† Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 268. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 62.

‡ Mir. Con. p. 68.

“professed

“professed object is to controvert the truth
“of the evangelist’s narration.”

Have you then really read so little of the treatise which you profess to answer, as to see no reason any where for this idea of Dr. Priestley? Is it not plainly the tendency of a considerable part of his arguments to show that there is no ground to suppose the miraculous conception to have been contained in the early copies of the New Testament? Would not the conclusion necessarily be, that it might therefore not have a general admission even in those times, in which it is referred to by some as a part of scripture? Is this no reason at all? On the same principle it may be said, the corollaries in Euclid, because they directly follow from the propositions which precede them, are unaccompanied with any reason whatever.

Dr. Priestley does not controvert the idea that the miraculous conception was found in Justin’s copy of the New Testament: does it therefore follow that it was also in all others? The utmost which could be said is, that there

there might be, in the time of Justin, copies of the gospels, some containing, and others not, the narrative of this event. Of consequence, since there could by no means be a certainty, that all or even the greater part of them contained this narrative; unless it be supposed that Justin had collated every one, and that his was the universal text then extant; (a position which none who knows what the fathers were, will venture to advance) I do not see how Dr. Priestley could have expressed himself with more modesty on the subject; and I am persuaded that, instead of censuring him so severely, you would, if you had given a proper attention to his train of argument, have been convinced, that he has acknowledged, not less, but more, than he needed, in this guarded expression.

When you engaged in the examination of Dr. Priestley's arguments, I am apt to think you rather dipped into them, than read them carefully and attentively through; otherwise you might have found, besides this clear implication,

implication, another sufficient reason for the expression *almost certain*. It is in that part of his observations, where he says, that “the
 “disbelief of the miraculous conception was
 “not confined to the Jewish, but extended
 “to the Gentile converts, even *in the time of*
 “*Justin Martyr.*” * From this the conclusion is obvious; that it is highly probable, that the admission of this fact into the gospels was only *partial* in Justin’s time. With what Justice then can Dr. Priestley be blamed for making a concession, which could proceed from nothing but the utmost fairness and candour? And what ground can there be for the assertion which you make,† that in the most early period of christianity, the miraculous conception had gained a general and universal reception?

To say, therefore, that “Dr. Priestley has
 “not produced any evidence against the testi-

* Theol. Rep. *ibid.* p. 278. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 84.

† Mir. Con. p. 84. Compare p. 82.

“mony

"mony of Justin Martyr to the miraculous
 "conception,"* is merely trifling upon the
 subject. For every single argument which is
 advanced to prove that the miraculous con-
 ception did not occur in the earliest copies of
 the gospels, is an evidence against Justin's
 testimony; and if all the arguments united
 afford a complete demonstration of the same;
 they totally *subvert* not only his testimony,
 but that of all contemporary writers (if there
 had been any) who might have joined with
 him in supporting the same hypothesis.

I am, Sir,

Your friend and servant,

J. POPE.

* Mir. Con. p. 68.

LETTER

LETTER IV.

REMARKS ON MR. NISBETT'S ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THE MIRACULOUS CONCEPTION.

SIR,

IN the view which has been given you of the numerous omissions into which you have fallen, as to Dr. Priestley's arguments on the miraculous conception, it is not improbable but you may have frequently put to yourself this question, *are not then many of my arguments anticipated by those very observations which I have made an appearance of answering?*

To which I can, I believe, truly reply; yes, Sir, more than one. Your very first argument* is completely anticipated by Dr. Priestley, of which you may easily satisfy yourself, if you compare your own remarks with his observations in p. 249, 250, and

* Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 12—14.

251, of the fourth volume of the Theological Repository.

As, in the remarks which I shall make, it is my design to follow the very order which you have marked out (only omitting the examination of such passages as are already answered in the treatise to which you reply) you will give me leave to attend you at the fourteenth page of your Observations.

“The character of Jesus (you say) was truly an *unique*; perfectly singular, and unexampled in the creation; as were the circumstances that attended the whole of what we know of him.”

That the circumstances into which Jesus was brought, were peculiarly difficult, and such as called for the exertion of all those great qualities, with which the gospels inform us he was adorned, cannot be doubted. But that these circumstances were such as no other man *could* be placed in, agreeably to his nature *as* a man; or that his virtues were such as in the *nature of things* it was *impossible* for any man, assisted as he was, to have shown,

shown, is more than any one can assert. In this view, therefore, though in one sense, he might be called an *unique*, in another, and that the most important, he was not so; but like every other man whom God had created; similar in his general frame, and placed in circumstances, properly human.

I wonder, that when you suggested this idea, you produced no passage from scripture to prove it. The events of his resurrection and ascension, as they were designed only to evince his divine commission, and were subsequent to what may be called properly the *human* part of his life, by no means show either that he was of a different nature, or that his merits and excellencies were acquired by different means from those by which any other man might acquire his. The utmost which they prove, is, that Jesus was distinguished by the Supreme Being above all other men whatever.

I could have wished that you had given the meaning of the word *unique*, more particularly. Does it imply that the nature of Christ was

was different from that of all other beings? But this is the point to be proved, not assumed. Does it imply that his birth was miraculous? This also is liable to the same exception. Would you understand by it, that all his circumstances, and the whole train of his conduct were different from those which obtain among other human creatures? But this is not fact, and certainly weakens the efficacy of his example. Where, on this supposition, would be the propriety of the exhortation;—*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus?* or how could it be said with any justice, that in all things *it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren; that he hath himself suffered, being tempted, and that he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin?* If there be any other cases in which the character of Christ was peculiarly distinguished, and from which your description of him as an *unique* might be deduced, it is a pity that you did not clearly mark them out, that your readers might labour under no difficulty as to the propriety
of

of their application. For my part, I confess, I know not of any such.

If, as you seem to intimate,* the circumstances of Christ's resurrection and ascension necessarily inferred his miraculous birth, there would be great weight in the adduction of these as *arguments* in favour of it; but till it be shown, that it is impossible, or inexpedient, that God should raise a man from the grave, and exalt him to a high dignity in heaven; (and I think, I durst challenge the ablest trinitarian to prove such an assertion) there is no more impropriety that this fact should take place, than that the being who is the subject of them should be of a rank superior to human. Indeed, as to all those advantages which might accrue to the gospel, in the way of evidence, example, or moral instruction, the preponderance is on the side of Christ's pure humanity; the minds of his disciples being more likely to be dazzled, and their ardour of imitation damped, on any

* Mir. Con. p. 14, 15.

other supposition.* As neither of these was the case with those who were the most likely to be so affected, the immediate followers of Christ; this affords a strong presumption, that they saw in him nothing supernatural, except the miracles which he performed, and the exemplary conduct which he manifested.

As the descent of the holy spirit on Christ at his baptism, and his consequent title of the son of God, are events of much less importance than those of his resurrection and ascension, the observations just made concerning these, will conclude, still more forcibly, with respect to the former.

* These remarks seem to obviate one of yours in p. 18, (comp. p. 19—21.) in which you think it not improbable, that *a messenger from God would be invested with every mark of dignity, which might have a tendency to convince men of his heavenly origin.* On this principle, a man with extraordinary and miraculous powers would be the least proper being for this purpose. With great *impropriety* therefore did Jesus, if he was of a nature superior to human, so frequently call himself *the son of man.*

There

There is, therefore, nothing in the circumstances of Christ, which would necessarily lead to any other ideas of him, but that he was a man like ourselves, only distinguished by extraordinary powers, and favoured with miraculous communications from the Supreme Being. Those expressions, therefore, which you regard* as proofs of his præ-existence, such as that of his *ascending up where he was before, coming down from heaven, &c.* must, of consequence, be understood figuratively, if we would make the scriptures speak, what they certainly do, a consistent language. Indeed Christ himself suggests this very idea, in his discourse with Nicodemus.† *If I have told you earthly things, says he (that is, if I have discoursed with you on plain and obvious subjects) and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things; of things of a mysterious and figurative nature? And no man hath ascended*

* Note, p. 15.

† John iii. 12, 13. See Grotius on this place.

up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the son of man which is in heaven. If you can make it appear that the last of these phrases is not to be understood figuratively; indeed if you can, by a just interpretation understand it otherwise than as a very high figure; it may perhaps be possible to take other similar ones only in a literal sense. But, as I believe that this cannot be done, without a violation of the plainest grammatical principles, the solution of other, the like difficult expressions, will naturally follow the fate of this; and instead of referring to a state of pre-existence, will mean, that miraculous communication of knowledge and powers to our blessed Saviour which marked him out as the peculiar favourite, or (which is the same) as the *only begotten son* of God. But these subjects have been so completely illustrated by *Lardner*, *Grotius*, the *Poloni Fratres*, and others, as to render it needless to enter into a farther discussion of them.

Were I to follow the judgment of my own mind, I should be inclined to tell you,
Sir,

Sir, that the next passage which you produce by way of argument is entitled to no other title, than that of mere declamation; but as you might be led to suppose that I had fixed this character on it, only to save myself the trouble of replying to what I could not confute, I shall give the most material parts of it an impartial examination.

You say,* “ it may be left to any man’s
 “ cool and deliberate judgment to determine,
 “ whether reasonings from what might have
 “ been expected (if allowed in the case
 “ before us) would not affect all miracles
 “ whatsoever, and all deviations from the
 “ common and regular modes of instruction,
 “ and consequently affect, even the credi-
 “ bility of christianity itself.”

Certainly, this consideration would have great weight, if arguments *à priori* were the only ones produced upon this subject; and the rejection of the miraculous conception, rested on this single evidence; but this you will not attempt even to intimate. Dr.

* Mir. Con. p. 15, 16.

Priestley, you know well, how much soever you may represent his arguments as mere conjectures,* has by no means contented himself with arguments *à priori*, though the presumption they afford in favour of his principles is very strong indeed. On the contrary, he connects these with real facts; he

* Pref. p. 4. Mir. Con. p. 32, 83. On these passages I cannot help asking you this question, whether you are seriously so great an enemy to *conjecture*, as you seem to be? If you are, how is it that you have laid the foundation of a very important part of your argument to establish the notion that St. Paul in 1 Theff. v. 1. &c. refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, and not to a future judgment, in *conjecture only*? And this conjecture is not only unsupported by any text in the Old or New Testament (for Dan. ii. 21. has no relation to the subject, and in Acts i. 7. *Χρονος η καιρος* is nothing more than a periphrastical expression for *time*, which is also the meaning of the phrase in this very passage before us) but is totally irrelative to the whole tenor of the apostle's argument from chap. iv. ver. 13. to chap. v. ver. 11. which can have no reference to any other event than that of the general judgment. You say indeed that it is a *conjecture*
which

he points out inconsistencies and absurdities in the accounts prefixed to the gospels of Matthew and Luke; he clearly proves that there were copies of the New Testament, in an early age, which were without these accounts; and from a comparison of all these circumstances, (not from reasonings *à priori* only) he deduces his conclusion. Why should not his arguments be represented in this connexion; but be mutilated and frittered into a number of observations, which are in this manner represented by you as totally independent and irrelative?

which carries with it the highest degree of probability; but on what foundation this probability rests, I cannot well see, unless it be that in chap. iv. ver. 13. &c is used; and in chap. v. ver. 1. &c is used again, which, as being an adversative conjunction, you perhaps imagined necessarily led to a change of the subject. But it may also lead to a transition from one part of the subject to another; which is here the most obvious, and certainly the true light in which it should be regarded. See Illustrat. of Passages in the New Test. p. 95. &c.

L 4

But,

But, as you think that Horace's rule is a good one in all cases, and that *demo unum, demo etiam unum*, may be the most effectual means of showing the weakness of an argument; let us consider what weight there is in your observations considered in this view also.

Reasonings, *à priori*, from what *might be expected*, against any particular miracle, will hold, I allow, with equal force against all miraculous interpositions; *unless these expectations are well grounded*; unless they arise from the circumstances of the supposed case; and are closely connected with the nature of the person or events to which they refer. In this view, though such reasonings must necessarily have a great efficacy, when applied to the particular case to which they have a reference; they have none with regard to miracles in general; the former being in their very nature circumscribed by limitations, which cannot be made to extend to cases or instances of a different sort. Of consequence, when in a supposed narrative of miraculous facts, which are attested by the best

best evidence, there should be found some also, of which the relaters could not have the same proof as of the others; and which facts also were of such a kind as to answer no purpose, nor have any effect as to the other incidents recorded; it is impossible that the reader should have the same kind of belief in them as in the former; and consequently his doubts in these particular cases, would by no means infer his doubts in the other more general ones; nor would even his total disbelief of the former, argue the like disbelief of the others. Indeed it is an universal principle, that the credibility of a writer with respect to those things which he has seen with his own eyes, or received from those who were themselves witnesses, is very different from that which has a relation to things of which neither himself nor they could be competent judges. And therefore, if the events in question are of a miraculous kind, and yet no end is answered by them (since it is certain that God will not display himself in an extraordinary a manner, without the most manifest necessity); the principles which
would

would lead to a rejection of these, can have no effect on the credibility of the others.

This is the distinction which is to be made between the miracles recorded in the New Testament, as performed by Jesus Christ, and the event which is the subject of these letters. If we suppose the general principle of a divine interposition for the reformation of the world, all the miracles which are related as being performed by him and his apostles, appear perfectly consistent and necessary; they therefore stand upon the same evidence as the general credibility of the gospel. If the same necessity occurred for the miraculous conception, the evidence of this would be equal. But it is the total defect of this necessity which greatly weakens this evidence; if it does not entirely overthrow it. Every other miracle in which Christ is concerned, how secret soever it was, even that of the transfiguration, has a connexion, more or less, with the great design on which he came into the world: and, as it is properly an instrument of promoting it,

its

its subordinate necessity may be clearly pointed out; but what is there in the miraculous conception, which can be shown to have any such connexion, or what necessity, principal or subordinate, can be pleaded in its favour?

This, then, establishes a most striking distinction between the miraculous conception, and the other facts of an extraordinary nature in the sacred history; and, instead of weakening the general evidence for miraculous interpositions, it appears to me to add strength to it, and this in proportion as such distinction is more and more conspicuous.

I allow that, prior to this, the general credibility of the sacred authors ought to be clearly demonstrated. And this you may be sensible it always is by every divine who knows any thing of the subject on which he is writing. Allowing this, therefore, the argument against the truth of particular facts, especially of such as have no necessary connexion with the general interests of christianity, cannot rise so high as to affect an
universal

universal proposition, which has been proved from principles independent on those by which those particular facts are effected. If these, therefore, be found inauthentic (provided they are not such as the writer had an opportunity of completely deciding upon) yet they will not take away his credibility with respect to others of which he was better able to form a judgment. It must be acknowledged that it will overthrow his divine inspiration; but this is a qualification not absolutely necessary for a historian even in the relation of miraculous events, which may be easily and in general faithfully recorded by an honest by-stander, who was possessed of intelligence and memory, and could afterwards express in proper language what he had seen and heard.

As to myself, I am a believer in the inspiration of the scriptures, in the proper sense of the expression; I am convinced that from persons enabled to perform miraculous works for the purpose of demonstrating the truth of their doctrines, none but true doctrines

trines could possibly come. But I do not see, that one who entertains a belief of the general credibility of the writers of the New Testament, and at the same time admits that they might have been mistaken in those facts and reasonings which have no immediate connexion with the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, must do this on such a principle, as will "affect all miracles whatever, overturn the faith of history, and give the lie to the records of seventeen centuries; or that he must renounce evidence equal to what we have for any historical fact whatever."*

You acknowledge,† that "the doctrine of the miraculous conception was not for some considerable time, made known to the Jewish believers." And‡ you allow not only that "there are no certain traces of its being made public, during our Saviour's life, but that Jesus was thought

* Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 15, 16.

† p. 17, 18.

‡ p. 45—52.

“to be the legitimate son of Joseph and Mary not only by the Jews in general, but even by the people of Nazareth, where he lived and was educated.” For this you give several reasons. And in all these you are anticipated by Dr. Priestley’s remarks quoted in a former letter; to which may be added the following, extracted from the same writer.*

“Though there might be reasons why the miraculous conception should be concealed from the enemies of Jesus (as it might be supposed to amount to a declaration of his being the Messiah†) there does not seem to have been any reason why it should have been concealed from his friends, as it would have tended to strengthen their faith in his divine mission. Besides, as Joseph and Mary were not

* Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 269—273. Hist. of Earl. Opin. vol. IV. p. 64—71.

† Which would be inconsistent with the design of Christ, who wished to convince the Jews by the evidence of his miracles only.

“enjoined

“ enjoined secrecy on this head, they would
 “ naturally speak of so wonderful a thing
 “ as that of a virgin being with-child, at
 “ least to their pious friends, who would
 “ give them credit for it; and if it had been
 “ believed by them, is it not probable, that
 “ more respect would have been paid to
 “ Jesus, during his infancy and childhood?
 “ — According to St. Luke, it must have
 “ been known also to Zacharias and Eliza-
 “ beth, if not to Simeon and Anna; the
 “ latter of whom is said to have *spoken of him*
 “ *to all that looked for redemption in Jerusalem*
 “ (Luke ii. 38.).— Supposing, however, that
 “ this fact had been a secret between Joseph
 “ and Mary only, and that they had agreed
 “ to keep it to themselves;—it cannot have
 “ been supposed to have been unknown to
 “ Jesus himself, after he was fully illumi-
 “ nated with respect to every thing that re-
 “ lated to his character and office; and it
 “ must, at some time or other, have been
 “ communicated to his disciples.—But we
 “ perceive no trace of their ever having
 “ known

" known it at all; there not being the least
 " mention of it, or the most obscure refe-
 " rence to it in all the subsequent gospel
 " history, or in any of the writings of the
 " apostles; so that, if it was a fact, it was,
 " to all appearance, a most extraordinary
 " miracle, without the smallest use or effect;
 " since the discovery of it excited no sur-
 " prise, nor left any impression by which it
 " can be traced."

The comparison of this abstract with what
 is above referred to will, I hope, effectually
 convince you that you have advanced no-
 thing, in your reply to Dr. Priestley, on this
 head, but what he had before thoroughly
 examined and answered.

You take notice,* under this head, of
 an argument of Nazarenus,† against the mi-
 raculous

* p. 46—48, *note*.

† Ap. Theol. Rep. vol. V. p. 135, 136. The au-
 thor of the ingenious tract from which this passage is
 taken, is the Rev. Mr. Henry Toulmin, of Chowbent, in
 Lancashire; a man whom I am glad to have this oppor-
 tunity

raculous conception, *that even the brethren of Jesus did not believe in him*; by observing that "this argument operates at least equally "against Jesus's being the Messiah, as "against the miraculous conception." And so it certainly does. But what is the direct conclusion? Plainly this; that the brethren of Christ had neither heard of nor experienced any thing which distinguished him from any other man. Supposing, therefore, his mother had been ever so much inclined to conceal his being so extraordinary a person, as to his birth, at least, from the world; would she give no intimation, nor betray any signs from which they, at least, might be acquainted with his superiority? Her veneration of him itself must have been so great, that it could not have escaped notice. And if so, inquiries would be made into the ground of this veneration; which certainly, tunity of calling my esteemed and valuable friend. The same idea is hinted by Dr. Priestley, Theol. Rep. vol. V. p. 105.

M

with

with his brethren, must have ended in a conviction of his superior nature, and have established their belief in him, as a great prophet, at least, much earlier than it appears from the scripture to have done. On every view, therefore, in which the subject has been hitherto considered, you do not appear to me to have answered, to any degree of satisfaction, a single argument which Dr. Priestley has produced.

In favour of your hypothesis of Christ's nature being superior to human, you urge,* that "some of the Jews, at least, in those times thought it would be one characteristic of their Messiah, that he should not have an ordinary birth." In proof of which you adduce John vii. 27. and the common reproach cast upon Christ, that he was the *carpenter's son, whose father and mother they knew.* (John vii. 42.) But this latter passage refers to the manner in which Christ speaks of himself *as the bread which*

* p. 18, 19.

came down from heaven. And the meaning plainly is, *we know that thou art the son of Joseph and Mary; how then canst thou say, that thou camest down from heaven?* If the expression which Christ uses must be necessarily restricted to his miraculous conception, your argument would have much force. But it is well known to have no such reference. It is, indeed, plainly figurative, and signifies only that the commission of Christ was from the supreme God. It has, therefore, no relation to the point which it is brought to support.

As to the other passage, *when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence he is*, that no conclusion can be drawn from it, but the ignorance of the Jews who made the remark, is evident from ver. 42. where the directly opposite language is held, *hath not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?*

You may perhaps say, that this very language strongly implies the miraculous

conception, as upon any other supposition, the probability is, that Christ was born at Nazareth. But might not the Jews misapply this prophecy? Or if they did not, would not Christ have come originally from Bethlehem, if he was a descendant of David, who had resided there? Or if he was to be born at Bethlehem, must his birth be necessarily miraculous? Till the negative of the former, and the affirmative of the latter of these questions are both well established, no conclusion can be drawn from either of these verses in favour of the assertion you make.

Indeed no argument can be drawn from the language of the unconverted Jews in this case; since they changed their expressions merely to suit their own purposes. So they say of Christ (John ix. 29.) *we know not whence he is*; though they knew him well, as Christ himself declares (vii. 28.) *ye both know me, and ye know whence I am*; which, as it was said in direct reply to the passage adduced by you, was undoubtedly intended to let the Jews know, that the expression,

when

when Christ cometh, we know not whence he is, was regarded by him as a mere subterfuge to serve their own unjust purposes.

And with respect to the words of Isaiah, *who shall declare his generation?* as nothing more can be fairly meant by them, than, *who shall declare the amazing events of his life;* this text has no reference at all to the miraculous conception.

Your observations in p. 19—21. have been anticipated by Dr. Priestley in the Theological Repository, p. 245—247, which passage is cited by me in the second letter. And as they coincide, or are rather only an amplification of a passage in p. 18. quoted in this letter, the reply to p. 18. is equally a reply to the other.

Dr. Priestley had observed that “the surprise of Mary upon some particular occasions in the youth of Christ seems incompatible with her knowledge of his being the Messiah.”* To which you reply, that as

* Theol. Rep. vol. V. p. 105, 106. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 122, 123.

“ the apostles—erred very much concerning
 “ the nature and design of his office ;—Mary,
 “ as far as we know, was not better in-
 “ structed, at the time which the objection
 “ refers to, on this head.”*

This observation you support by the authority of Dr. Lardner, who, because he was an unitarian, you think will not be suspected of partiality. But, whether he was an unitarian or not, his opinions (though of all fair writers, I believe he is the fairest) are as open to examination as those of any other man whatever. And his ideas in this case, you will acknowledge, are nothing more than mere conjecture. Though even as conjectures, they do not imply that ignorance which you ascribe to her, but, at the utmost, such a surprise as any sudden accident would necessarily occasion in the mind even of one who was yet in *general* prepared for extraordinary interpositions. For, notwithstanding, such an one might be in most cases, aware

* See Mir. Con. p. 33, 34, 35.

and on his guard, yet the particular instances themselves might very naturally raise great astonishment and cause violent emotions in him. But these emotions would soon wear off, and he would at last coolly refer such incidents to the cause from which they were derived, and to which they had the most obvious relation. Dr. Lardner's idea therefore may be just, and not irreconcilable with the circumstances of the history, even on the supposition of the reality of the events prior to those to which he refers. Nay Joseph and Mary might reasonably *wonder* to hear Simeon express himself in so extraordinary a strain of prophetic rapture. At the same time, it must be acknowledged, that, according to the account in this chapter, their wonder is expressed in the wrong place; for it is made to *precede* Simeon's *predictions*, and to follow only such expressions as would be naturally employed by one who was acquainted with the extraordinary circumstances of Christ's birth (which must be at that

time a matter of public notoriety*) and was led by the feelings of piety and gratitude to return God thanks for so great a blessing.

Nor does it appear to me that Mary's *keeping and pondering in her heart*, the relation which the shepherds gave of the angelic vision, is inconsistent with the miraculous

* That it should be so, and yet be so soon afterwards completely forgotten, and that none of the Jews should ever allude to it in any case, does not render the account of the miraculous conception very probable. This, indeed, has been already taken notice of, and yet it deserves a repeated consideration. For since I can hardly think it possible, that a circumstance, which seemed to have excited so general an inquiry, and struck so many different persons with such amazement, should have been easily forgotten even in a long course of years; so I am convinced, that, when Christ appeared in so signal a manner, and manifested himself so illustriously by repeated and astonishing miracles, the recollection of this event of his miraculous birth must have been excited with irresistible force. That it was not excited (and it is plain from the sacred history that it was not) is of itself sufficient to cast a confutation on the whole story, and stamp on it the character of imposture and forgery.

conception.

conception. Indeed, I cannot think that it naturally means what Dr. Priestley seems to imagine, that *she was at a loss what to think* of such things. The meaning seems rather to be, *she made them the subject of frequent and serious meditation.*

In these two instances, therefore, I find myself induced to desert Dr. Priestley, and follow Dr. Lardner and you. And were these the only ones, I should acknowledge that this part of the argument is incapable of support. But there is another instance to which Dr. Priestley adverts, and which you have passed over in silence.*

† “When Jesus was twelve years old, and
“told them, (Joseph and Mary) that he
“must be about his Father’s business, or at

* This I could have wished you had not done, as you do not refer in this part of your argument to any particular page. I looked in vain for your quotation, in the fourth volume of the Repository; and after much difficulty found it in the *fifth*.

† Theol. Rep. vol. V. p. 105, 106. Hist. Earl. Op.
ub. sup.

“ his

“ his Father’s house (Luke ii. 50.) *they understood not the saying that he spake unto them, and Mary kept all these sayings in her heart.*”

As Dr. Priestley has mentioned this circumstance in so summary a manner, give me leave to draw it out at full length, as it appears to me to have much weight in this part of the subject.

We are told, in the first of these chapters, that “ the angel Gabriel was sent from God to Mary; that he came to her, and addressed her in a very striking manner; that he informed her that the Holy Ghost should come upon her, and the power of the Highest overshadow her, and that the holy thing which should be born of her should be called the son of God. We are also told, that she received this notice with all due devotion and humility;—that on her visiting Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist in a manner almost equally surprising, other wonderful events occurred; that, on the birth of Jesus, she

“ was

“ was visited by shepherds, who had seen a
 “ multitude of the heavenly host directing
 “ them to this infant;” that (according to the
 second chap. of Matthew) “ wise men, guided
 “ by a star, which attended them to the house
 “ where the infant was, came and paid him
 “ regal homage; that Mary kept all these
 “ things and pondered them in her heart,
 “ well knowing their cause and tendency;
 “ that Herod, hearing of the infant’s royal
 “ dignity, sent forth and massacred all the
 “ infants in Bethlehem and the neighbour-
 “ hood;—an event with which she could not
 “ but be deeply affected;”—and yet, that
 she, together with Joseph, who was equally
 well acquainted with all these circumstances,
 were *amazed* at an event not merely less sur-
 prising, but *trifling* compared with them, the
 display of extraordinary capacity in Jesus at a
 very premature age; which indeed they must
 have been, for a long time, witnesses of, and
 repeated instances of which must have been
 afforded them every day of their lives.
 For it may be truly said, that, except the
scene

scene on which this event took place, there is nothing to distinguish the conversation of Jesus with the Jewish doctors, from what must have frequently passed under the observation of his parents themselves.* For them, therefore, to express so high a degree of wonder, indeed for them to wonder at all, when they saw him engaged in this conversation, is plainly irreconcilable with every idea they must have entertained from the facts which had fallen so repeatedly under their own observations. Particularly, as they must be convinced from the nature of his birth, that his relation to God was properly that of a son, they could not avoid referring the answer he made to them, *wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business,* to the commission with which he was invested, for which they might naturally con-

* Unless we suppose that he concealed his knowledge from them, or that it lay dormant, till this occasion called it forth to public view. But this would bear so hard upon the miraculous conception itself, that no friend to this doctrine would be likely to advance it.

clude

clude he was preparing himself thus early. That *they understood not the saying which he spake unto them*, is a clear proof that they had no idea of any such commission; and consequently that they knew nothing of any extraordinary event which preceded it. In both these views, therefore, the conduct of Joseph and Mary, in this event, is perfectly inconsistent with the notion of Christ's miraculous conception, and consequently overthrows the authenticity of those narratives which are annexed to our present copies of the New Testament, and contain the account of this supposed transaction.

These observations hold independently on the idea which you have suggested, that "Mary* might be ignorant of many circumstances which arose, from her son's infancy, to the complete accomplishment of his work, in perfect consistency with her knowledge of his being the Messiah." For the inconsistency which is just now shown between the notion of the miraculous

* Mir. Con. p. 34.

conception,

conception, and the surprise of Joseph and Mary, is taken from those circumstances of which Mary could not be ignorant, whatever might be her conceptions as to other particular events, in which the messiahship of Jesus was concerned. So that this remark of yours will have no effect upon the preceding reasoning.

As to the comparison which you make* between the ignorance and errors of the apostles, and that which you ascribe to Mary on this head; it does not appear to me that any can be made between them. The ignorance and errors of the former arose from a very different cause from what might be supposed to affect her mind. As their attachment to Christ was the effect only of the miracles which they saw him perform, their first belief in him would naturally be nothing more than a high opinion of his extraordinary talents and character. Of consequence it must be accompanied with many crude ideas which would necessarily require a gradual

* P. 33.

correction. The prejudices which they entertained of Christ's temporal kingdom, and the expectations which they formed, of attaining honours and emoluments in it, would require some time, to be totally eradicated. And it appears from the sacred history, that it was in consequence only of repeated instructions, and after a long time indeed, that these errors gave place to just principles.

But the case with Mary was totally opposite. Her mind had been so completely illuminated by the immediate efficacy of the Holy Spirit, and she had been so accustomed to divine visitations, that nothing of a less miraculous nature could have any great effect upon her. Her surprise, therefore, in the case above referred to, cannot be reconciled with the supposition of any such visitations; which of consequence again, in this view, lose their credibility.

It is probable also, from this reasoning, that if Christ ever declared himself to her, on the nature of his kingdom, or the doctrines which he was appointed to teach, she would

would have juster ideas of them than his disciples had; all her prejudices being banished by the miraculous events which accompanied his birth. Of this certainly we should have had some intimations in the sacred history. But as no such are given, there is no reason to presume that she had better advantages in these respects than they had; and consequently knew nothing of those events prior to Christ's birth which would have had so irresistible a tendency to lead her into just ideas on those important subjects. Indeed the infrequency of her appearance in the gospel history, and the very small degree of importance in which she is regarded in it, afford a striking presumption, that there was nothing in her circumstances, which gave her a pre-eminence over any other woman, or that she had been the peculiar object of divine regard.

Elizabeth is represented in the first chapter of Luke, as Mary's cousin and intimate acquaintance. She was pregnant, in a miraculous manner, with John the Baptist, at the
same

same time that Mary was so, with Jesus. The angel who visited Mary, acquainted her also with Elizabeth's wonderful conception. Both Elizabeth and Mary met together, and had a conference on these surprising circumstances. Can it be supposed, that, immediately after this, they should bury them all in silence, and say nothing of them to their sons themselves, who were thus pointed out, as it should seem, on purpose to be noticed the one by the other? They were nearly of the same age; related to each other; and of the same pious dispositions. And yet John declares that he *did not know Jesus*; that even at the time when the spirit descended upon Jesus, *he knew him not* (John i. 29—34); and the evangelists Matthew and Luke (Matt. xi. 2, 3. Luke vii. 19, 20.) inform us that John sent two of his disciples to inquire into his pretensions.

Though the last of these events may be reconciled with the knowledge which John could not avoid having of Jesus at the time of his baptism, and seems to have taken place

N

more

more for the benefit of John's disciples, than for the information of John himself; yet the former is totally inexplicable, on the supposition of the truth of the events recorded in the first chapter of Luke, concerning John. For can it be thought, that John, during the course of thirty years, related as he was to Jesus, who was himself also so eminently distinguished, should know nothing of him, nor once advert to their relationship? Would nothing drop to lead to an idea either of their acquaintance, or to a reason why this acquaintance did not subsist?

John, you will say, by reason of his *being in the deserts*,* could not know Jesus, till the commencement of his public ministry. But is it to be supposed, that he was so constantly in this state of retirement, as never to visit his parents? or did his parents never visit him? Did he never hear of, or see his relation Jesus, whose birth had been so extraordinary, and who, like himself, seemed designed to act so illustrious a part in the

* Luke i. 80.

world?

world? It is not credible that they should be wholly unacquainted with each other; nor indeed is it likely that their acquaintance should be less than that of the closest intimacy; especially as their estrangement could not answer any one purpose with respect to the ministry of either.

But with all this, the circumstances which occurred at Jesus's baptism are totally inconsistent. We are, therefore, reduced to the alternative either of giving up this or the story of the miraculous conception. That is, we must either reject the belief of an event, which is credible in itself, has a close connection with our Saviour's ministry, and is related in the most unvarying manner by all the evangelists; or that of one, which has none of these characters, which is in the highest degree improbable, in itself, has no connexion with any part of our Saviour's character or conduct; is supposed to be related by two evangelists only; in whose relations there occur circumstances not easily reconcileable. Which of these is the most

probable supposition, it appears to me by no means difficult to determine.

Dr. Priestley observes, that had the miraculous conception been a fact so well attested as it is represented, * “ the eyes of all the country must have been fixed on Jesus as the promised Messiah, and all attempts to conceal it, after his public appearance, would have come too late.” In reply to which you make these two observations, which seem to me to contain the whole weight of your argument.

† 1. “ That the Jews were so disgusted at the meanness of his appearance; and his professions were so different from their expectations, that he was obliged to use great caution in declaring himself the Messiah; and, therefore, though Simeon and Anna, and many other pious persons had given testimony to him, yet their

* Theol. Rep. ub. sup. p. 296. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 66.

† Nish. Mir. Con. p. 36—43. Præfert. p. 40, 42, 43.

“ testimony

“ testimony might be disregarded by the
 “ Jewish nation, because they saw nothing
 “ in him that led to a confirmation of it.

And 2. “ That in consequence of having
 “ undergone great calamities, which were
 “ brought upon them by pretenders to the
 “ messiahship, they were apprehensive of
 “ farther sufferings, and were therefore be-
 “ come more cautious and guarded against
 “ farther impositions.”

Now it appears to me to be the misfortune of these observations, that they take for granted the very point which they are brought to demonstrate. The meanness of Christ's appearance would have vanished in their ideas, had the Jews been acquainted with his miraculous conception. They would not have regarded him as the son of Joseph and Mary, though born in their house ; but as the appointed Saviour, who was manifested to them in so distinguished a manner ; and, instead of treating his human parents with disrespect, they would have considered them as objects of peculiar attention ; they

would have made particular inquiries into their birth and family, and not have failed to trace this illustrious infant to his great progenitor David, from whom their prophets had taught them, he should descend. Having their eyes fixed upon him from this early period, they would follow him onwards through his childhood and youth, to the time when his ministry began; and then finding his powers, of which they would have before conceived a high expectation, display themselves in the most signal and illustrious miracles, they would never have been offended at the meanness of this appearance, which was done away at his birth, and would probably have now no existence, after so early a manifestation of the divine favour to him. He would therefore be under no necessity to use caution in declaring his pretensions, which would on the contrary be immediately attended to, and received with all reverence and respect.

To suppose therefore that they were offended at his mean appearance, must necessarily

farily imply either an ignorance of his miraculous birth, or a forgetfulness of it. The latter of these is impossible in so short a time as the course of thirty years; the former, therefore, alone remains, as the most probable method of accounting for this circumstance. And of consequence, the story of the miraculous conception, with which this is totally irreconcilable, must, on this supposition, lose its credibility.

Your second observation is a direct conclusion from the first, and therefore cannot need much consideration. Indeed, I much question, whether it will be found supported by fact. The political conduct of the Jews does not seem to have been much guided by the principle of caution. They were rather inclined to follow any seditious leader, who would promise them a deliverance from the Roman yoke. When, therefore, they saw a prince born, whose rivalship Herod dreaded, they could not be *troubled* at such an event, but must rejoice at the prospect of so immediate a deliverance, and

wait with anxious expectation the period of his declaring himself the promised Messiah. All this time, their attention must be earnestly kept up, and their minds awake to every circumstance of his life. And if they found themselves at last disappointed in their expectations, as to the nature of the deliverance they were to receive from him, they would either bear this with patience, or, if they expressed themselves on this subject, they would certainly advert in clear and unambiguous terms to the circumstances on which they had founded such expectations. As no traces of either one or the other occur in the sacred history, we may fairly conclude that the event, to which they would refer, had never any existence.

You say (though you do not refer to the place) that Dr. Priestley* "*acknowledges a scheme may be devised to reconcile the inconsistencies with which he has charged the history in question, but that he has not told us what this scheme is.*"

* Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 43, 44.

This

This passage which you here quote, is, I find, in one of those, the omission of which I have complained of in a former letter. And though I cannot say, that you have in this place given a *false citation*, yet you have taken the words so much out of the connexion in which they ought to appear, as to make them convey a very different sense from what was intended by Dr. Priestley himself. The connexion in which he has given them is the following.

* "The two histories of the miraculous
 "conception are themselves remarkably dif-
 "ferent from each other; and, though it
 "may be possible to contrive a scheme, by which
 "they may be reconciled, yet there are such
 "capital circumstances, in each of the ac-
 "counts, omitted by the other, as it can
 "hardly be supposed would have been
 "omitted, if the writers had been acquainted
 "with them."

* Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 293. Hist. Earl. Op.
 vol. IV. p. 147.

The

The plain meaning of this passage is, that Dr. Priestley regards the scheme by which these accounts might be reconciled as a very improbable and contemptible one: you, by your manner of citing the clause, naturally lead your readers to conclude, that Dr. Priestley is sensible that the accounts are reconcileable, but, that he is determined, in the face of conviction, to attempt the overthrow of both of them.

You say that he has not *told* us what this scheme is, by which they may be reconciled. And why has he not? Plainly, because he thought it would occur to any reader. The scheme is this; that Matthew and Luke, in their accounts of the miraculous conception, wherever they differ, relate different circumstances of the same event. And it is on this supposition, the whole of the doctor's argument in this place turns. As he has shown that, even on this supposition, the omissions of each are such as can be hardly admitted; you will give me leave to abandon it; and to declare, what he has not ventured to

to do, that the accounts of Matthew and Luke are perfectly *inconsistent with each other*; that these historians do not relate different circumstances, but that the same event is represented by one in a very different manner from what it is by the other; that Matthew's account of the vision to Joseph is inconsistent with Luke's silence on this head; that the wise men from the east in Matthew are the same as the shepherds in Luke; that Matthew's silence, as to the manger, is inconsistent with Luke's express narration of it; as, on the contrary, the particular narrative given by Matthew of the slaughter of the infants, is irreconcilable with Luke's silence on this important and affecting circumstance. In short, I am persuaded that if these two accounts of the miraculous birth of Jesus be considered on the same principles as any common narratives should be, they will be found to have every mark of forgery and imposture, and none of those characters which belong to authentic histories, and which appear conspicuous in other parts of these gospels.

You

You argue also in favour of the miraculous conception, from its general admission in the time of Justin Martyr.* But you do not consider here, that you again take for granted the point to be proved. The general admission is the matter in controversy; for though Justin Martyr and some others might entertain this opinion, we have no certain information that this was the prevalent belief. It is a fact, that numbers of the Hebrew christians continued to a much later period; and if they had not, the general reception of this opinion in Justin's time would prove nothing as to its being originally contained in the New Testament.

The subject you suppose must have been fully discussed, and the Nazarene principles of consequence exploded. Would not this argument hold in favour of the prevailing opinions of any age? Were not the trinitarian principles established after much discussion? If it could be made appear that Justin Martyr held no other absurd tenets,

* Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 61—70.

there

there might be some weight in your argument. He might be looked up to as an example of free inquiry and accurate conclusion. But you know that this was not his character. He was credulous and enthusiastical.

The argument of general reception we use in favour of christianity, and with great justice. Because this made its way amidst the greatest opposition, and the most dreadful persecution. But this cannot be said with respect to any particular system of opinions contained, or supposed to be contained in the New Testament. These, therefore, may have not only found their way, but may have become very prevalent among christians, without having gone through a proper discussion. And as this may have been the case in Justin's age as well as in any other, no conclusion can be drawn from his mere declaration, that any particular doctrine, which he advances, is to be regarded as part of the original gospel of Jesus Christ. The doctrine, therefore, of the miraculous conception,

ception, though asserted by him, is as liable to controversy, as if he had never spoken decisively on the subject.

As little force as I think there is in favour of the miraculous conception, as attested by Justin Martyr, equally little is there against the opposite opinion, from the observation, that "though it was supported by all the learning and abilities of Symmachus, who was an eminent commentator, it was not admitted either by Origen, Eusebius, or others who yet highly admired and approved his writings."* Indeed, I cannot help expressing my surprise, that you should advance such arguments. In matters of opinion, arguments from authorities are the weakest which can be used. Were any one, who was writing in favour of the Ebionite doctrine, as having been generally admitted in the time of Symmachus, to allege this as an argument why it should be now admitted, you would, most justly, appeal from such authority, to the merits of the cause itself;

* Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 78—81.

which,

which, you might say, are independent on any names, how eminent soever they may be. And is not the same argument equally conclusive on the opposite side?

Let the age, in which Symmachus lived, be supposed to have been an age of inquiry and examination, even more than it really was; if the rejection of his opinion infers the falsehood of it, the general rejection of any other opinion will prove the same. I need not mention the consequences which would result from this. History speaks plainly enough to the point of the rejection, and even to the abolition, for a number of ages, of the most rational opinions. The argument has a hundred edges; and, as it will prove every thing, it will of consequence, prove nothing.

I do not perceive any other argument of importance advanced by you on this subject, excepting one, which, as I intend to consider it more particularly in a future letter, I shall here content myself with just adverting to.

This

This is your appeal to Justin Martyr* with respect to the census which is represented in the beginning of Luke, as having been taken at time of Christ's birth.

As you have not, in this place, given a complete view of Dr. Priestley's argument, you will, I hope, permit me to supply the deficiency.

† "As Judea was not at that time (that is, in the time of Herod) a province of the Roman empire, but had a king of its own, though in alliance with Rome, and in a state of dependence upon it, the Roman census could not regularly extend to that country. What the Romans had the power of commanding, is not the question." — "But while Herod was king, Judea was governed by Jewish laws, and subject to no taxes, but such as were imposed and levied by Jews."

* Nisb. Mir. Con. p. 71, 72.

† Theol. Rep. vol. V. p. 91—93. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 125—127.

" Dr.

“ Dr. Lardner has himself made it suffi-
 “ ently evident, that a census was the most
 “ odious way of imposing a tax, and there-
 “ fore the Romans never had recourse to it,
 “ even in the proper provinces of the em-
 “ pire, except in very particular circumstan-
 “ ces. — Though Herod might be in dis-
 “ grace with Augustus, — it is not probable
 “ that the people — would have borne such
 “ an unprecedented insult, without such mur-
 “ murings as we should have heard of, espe-
 “ cially from Josephus. This writer, in his
 “ account of the census that was taken in
 “ Judea, on its being made a proper Roman
 “ province, shows that the minds of the
 “ Jews were at that time exceedingly dis-
 “ posed to revolt at the measure; and it was
 “ taken in no more than one part of the
 “ country, over which Herod had been king.
 “ It did not extend to the dominions of
 “ Herod the tetrarch of Galilee, those of
 “ Philip, or those of Lysanius.

“ Dr. Lardner is of opinion, that Jose-
 “ phus mentions this census in the time of

O

“ Herod

“ Herod the Great, in saying that *the people*
 “ *of Judea took an oath to be faithful to Cæsar,*
 “ *and the interests of the king.* But he has
 “ not proved that this expression is equiva-
 “ lent to the *taking of a census*; and the most
 “ rational interpretation of it is, that it was
 “ an oath of friendship and alliance. Be-
 “ sides, the measure of taking a Roman
 “ census in a foreign country, of such mag-
 “ nitude as Judea then was, was certainly
 “ entitled to a more particular narrative, in
 “ such a history as that of Josephus.”*

But

* There is another omission made by Mr. Nisbett in
 Dr. Priestley's arguments here (Theol. Rep. vol. V.
 p. 94. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 128.). “ It is
 “ highly improbable that Joseph, who lived at Nazareth,
 “ situated three days journey from Bethlehem, should be
 “ obliged to go thither on the account of it.” For I
 may perhaps be told that this difficulty is obviated by a
 passage in Livy (lib. XLII. cap. ix.) where the historian,
 speaking of a census taken by Fulvius Flaccus, and
 Posthumius Albinus, says, “ L. Posthumius consul pro
 “ concione edixerat, qui Socium Latini nominis ex edictō
 “ C. Claudii consulis redire in civitates suas debuissent;

“ ne

But of all this you take no notice. What you have remarked upon, is only the supposed testimony of Justin Martyr to this census, which Dr. Priestley, with great probability, thinks to have been nothing but a reference to the narrative in this part of St. Luke, and which Justin takes for granted, was also found in the Roman records.

For Justin Martyr, though a very worthy man, was (as has been observed) exceedingly credulous; and would therefore naturally think that an event referred to by a supposed evangelist could not but be found in the public records of Rome. Whether his ac-

“ne quisquam Romæ, sed omnes in suis civitatibus
“censerentur.”

But this, besides being an extraordinary measure, is by no means a parallel case to *Joseph's being supposed to go from Nazareth to Bethlehem*; for in this census all strangers were ordered to leave Rome, and go (*in suas civitates*) to the states or cities to which they belonged. Whereas Joseph is represented as leaving the place to which he actually did belong, and going to one where he had no connexions, and which it does not appear that he had ever inhabited.

count was controverted, cannot certainly be determined. It is plain, however, from the above extract, that fact and history are against him. And whether, with so much credulity as he is universally allowed to have had, the honesty of his heart will of itself be sufficient to establish his credibility in such matters as those, which require an accurate examination, to which Justin does not seem to have been competent, may be left to any critical reader to decide.

I am, SIR,

Your friend and brother,

J. POPE.

As the tendency of all the preceding arguments is to state the difficulties attending the miraculous conception only, and Luke's genealogy is contained in the chapter in which I suppose the gospel to begin, you will perhaps ask, what ideas I entertain of this.

To

To which I very frankly reply, that it appears to me to have all the marks of interpolation. It is inserted in a place to which it has no relation; is quite distinct from and independent upon every part of the history; it is carried much farther back than it would probably have been, if Luke had been its author; Abraham, (perhaps only David) being the last person to whom it would have been extended; for all the following names are a mere empty list, and prove nothing of that for which they may be justly supposed to be introduced.

Besides a great number of names inserted without any known authority, it is in one place directly contrary to the genealogy given in the Old Testament. Salah is made the son of Cainan, as Cainan is of Arphaxad, when Salah was Arphaxad's immediate son.*

There

* The Camb. MS. indeed omits Cainan here, but this is contrary to all other Mss. the Hebrew (Gen. x. 24, 11, 12.) makes Arphaxad the father of Salah, but the LXX. in these places make Arphaxad to be the

There is also so great a variety in the readings, and in the order of these proper names in the Mss. that the true text can hardly be ascertained, even supposing Luke had written a genealogy. Dr. Giesbach says expressly of it, *incredibilis varietas in scribendis nominibus propriis*. Mr. Wetstein, *magna hæc est perturbatio in codicibus*; Mr. Matthæi mentions seven lectionaries which are without this genealogy, two of which, he says, are very ancient. And Dr. Mill, as a close of his observations on this part, says plainly, that*

father of Cainan, and Cainan of Salah. See Sharpe's Univ. Hist. p. 14, 15. *note* and the references there. Radcliffe's edition.

* *Hactenus Varietates. Quas quidem plerasque omnes notare volui, nec lectori quidquam invidisse censere, quod ei usu quoquo modo vel esse vel etiam videri poterit ad conciliandas, quæ genealogica hæc vexant, difficultates. Quod si parum, aut etiam fortasse, nihil quidquam remedii hic afferant exemplaria Mss. id adeo non mirum videri debet, ut potius miraculi loco sit, si post tot sæcula, tabulis (quas Judæi ad excidium usque summa cura custodierant, et è quibus stemma deduxit Lucas) pridem amissis novæ lucis aliquid nobis jam sive è membranis veterum sive etiam aliunde suboriatur.* Mill in loc.

“ the

“ the difficulties attending the genealogies of
 “ Luke and Matthew admit of little or no
 “ solution either by means of the Mss. of the
 “ ancients, or by any other methods what-
 “ ever.” He therefore confesses himself
 obliged to have recourse to registers totally
 unknown, against the faith of all known
 authorities, and to rely on mere conjecture
 to get clear of a difficulty which he finds
 insurmountable.

LETTER V.

ON THE GENUINENESS OF IGNATIUS'S LESSER
EPISTLES.

SIR,

THOUGH the arguments which have been already adduced seem to me sufficient to establish the point to which they are directed, there is one objection which still presents itself, on which you lay so great stress, as to make it the subject, in a manner, of a separate treatise. Your whole appendix is taken up in urging the evidence of Ignatius, a father of the first century, to the miraculous conception; an evidence which cannot be disputed from the circumstance that he was the intimate companion of the apostles themselves, and was perfectly acquainted with their doctrine.*

* Appeal, p. 36.

This,

This, I acknowledge, appears very plausible, and would, in many cases, be fair argument. But that acquaintance with the apostles does not necessarily infer a perfect acquaintance with their doctrine, has been hinted in a former letter; and that Ignatius, if the epistles ascribed to him, were really his, was not acquainted with the doctrine of the apostles, may be fairly inferred from the numerous absurdities which these epistles contain.

Among these are to be reckoned his assertion of the proper Deity of Jesus Christ; * his empty imagination relative to the miraculous conception, that † “the virginity of
 “ Mary and the birth of Jesus were kept
 “ secret from the devil; that on this occasion a star appeared in the heavens brighter
 “ than all the other stars; that these, together
 “ with the sun and moon, danced round it;
 “ and that it cast such a splendour as to ex-

* Ignatius's Epistles, *passim*.

† Ad Ephes. § 19.

“ceed

"ceed the light of all these together; his
 "gross idea of the eucharist, that* it is the
 "very flesh of Jesus Christ which suffered for
 "our sins; and† the indecent height to
 "which he carries episcopal authority; so as
 "to place obedience to the bishop on the
 "same footing as obedience to God, and‡
 "doom to a state of perdition those who
 "were possessed of more knowledge than
 "he."

These certainly are no proofs that Ignatius was well acquainted with the doctrine of the apostles; on the contrary, they hang as a dead weight on all arguments which may be drawn from his belief of any doctrine to prove it apostolic; and irresistibly establish this principle, that no credit is due to him, excepting in those things which may be called mere matters of fact. Of consequence his assertion of the doctrine of the miraculous

* Ad Smyrnaeos, § 7.

† Ad Smyrn. § 8. ad Polycarp, § 6, 8. ad Ephes. § 5, 6. & in aliis locis.

‡ Ad Polycarp, § 5.

conception,

conception, is of no signification towards establishing the proof of it as an apostolic sentiment; but his quoting any passages contained in the gospels, is the assertion of a mere matter of fact which lay before him, and establishes the genuineness of that part of scripture from which his citation is taken. If therefore in any part of his epistles he has quoted the passages which contain the miraculous conception, this is a plain attestation to the authenticity of this portion of the gospel history.

But this attestation is found in none of those which are called the genuine epistles of Ignatius. In one of the interpolated epistles it appears clear and express. If this therefore be produced as evidence in favour of the miraculous conception, the stress laid upon it must necessarily be of such a kind as to include the idea that this evidence surpasses all the united force of that which is supplied by the other epistles. What consequences I might draw from this you may easily

easily judge.* But on this I will not attempt to dwell.

It will naturally occur to you, that, as the absurdities above referred to, destroy the authority of Ignatius in favour of any tenets, which he may advance as matters of doctrine; they at the same time give occasion to doubts as to the authenticity of the compositions themselves in which such absurdities are

* “ Did you not know that both the epistles mention
 “ the miraculous conception, and that this was all I
 “ undertook to prove?—You have acknowledged, in
 “ express terms, that the smaller epistle, equally with
 “ the other, expresses Ignatius’s opinion, as being fa-
 “ vourable to the miraculous conception.—Now, if
 “ you can prove that the method which I have adopted has
 “ furnished me with keener and sharper weapons against
 “ Dr. Priestley, than what the smaller epistles will sup-
 “ ply, I am afraid, I shall not be able to exculpate myself
 “ ENTIRELY from the use of the unworthy methods of
 “ misrepresentation and false citation of which you accuse
 “ me.” See Nisbett’s Appeal to the Public in reply to
 J. Pope, p. 29, 30.

I shall make no comment on these passages, except to hint what has been observed before, that the design of
 Mr.

are found. For it can hardly be supposed that one who was well acquainted with the doctrine of the apostles should fall into any absurdities at all, especially into such as are so obvious and glaring.

I shall therefore make it the subject of the following letter to show that the lesser epistles of Ignatius themselves, are not, in their present form, the authentic writings of that immediate successor of the apostles. I will not say, that they contain nothing of Ignatius's; but what they do contain is very little, and I fear, not easily separable from the vast quantity of forgery and imposture

Mr. Nisbett's observations on Ignatius is more than to prove that he *mentions* the miraculous conception, if there be any meaning in the words—"this testimony of Ignatius—will be a considerable evidence in favour of the *authenticity of those chapters in our gospels, which contain this part of our Lord's history;*" (Nisbett on the Mir. Con. p. 106, 107.) and that it is a favourable circumstance for Mr. Nisbett, that he was *totally unacquainted* with the very epistles which he so unluckily cited. (See Nisb. Appeal, p. 28.) But this is a very *singular* mode of vindicating himself.

with

with which they are most thoroughly impregnated.*

The best summary, with which I am acquainted, of the arguments on each side of the question, is given by *Dupin*, in his *Bibliotheca Patrum*, at the end of his Observations on the life and writings of Ignatius. As *Dupin*, though an impartial writer, was a zealous advocate for the *authenticity* of these epistles, it will not be supposed that he

* I am a little surprised at the following passage in *Dr. Priestley's History of the Church*. (vol. I. p. 223.)

"It is probable that the *epistles* ascribed to *Ignatius*, especially the lesser ones, are in the main genuine, and the *interpolations* in them may easily be distinguished." For, with respect to those which are called *interpolated*, the interpolations are so interwoven into the text, that if separated from it, they will leave nothing but a few unconnected, and unmeaning clauses; as to the *lesser epistles*; I think it would require a very dexterous hand indeed, to separate the genuine text from the spurious. If *Dr. Priestley* means, that the interpolations may be easily discovered, I acknowledge it; and would extend the observations so far as to say, that the text cannot easily be found amidst the interpolations.

has

has omitted any thing of importance in favour of his side of the question. If therefore his arguments are found insufficient to the point he would establish, I cannot help thinking that the matter may be fairly considered as pretty well decided.

As I do not think that all the arguments used by the advocates of the inauthenticity of these epistles are equally strong, and would wish to lay before you the whole merits of the cause fairly, I shall first mention those to which Dupin appears to have given a satisfactory reply, and then such as, according to my ideas, still retain their full force.

The first observation which Dupin seems to have answered in a satisfactory manner, is, that those epistles are mentioned in Nicephorus's Stichometry, or catalogue of canonical and spurious books of scripture, among those which are called apocryphal. For this, he observes, proves only that they were not regarded as belonging to the sacred scriptures, but has

no

no relation to the question whether they are the work of Ignatius.*

He appears also to have given a sufficient reply to the objections drawn from a supposed reference in them to the opinions of Saturninus and Theodotus; who lived in a later age than Ignatius; because these were the same as those of the Gnostics and Simon Magus, with whom Ignatius was contemporary.

Of no more weight is the objection that Onesimus, who is mentioned by Ignatius, in the epistle to the Philadelphians as Bishop of Ephesus, was dead before the time of writing the epistle; because it is possible that this Onesimus might not be the same person as he who was the disciple of Paul, and if he was, he might be alive at this time: for

* Yet, upon consideration, there is more weight in this objection than I at first thought. For if these epistles were really from the hand of Ignatius, the friend of the apostles, it is hardly to be supposed that they would be regarded, as they are by Nicephorus, in the very lowest rank of authority.

there

there are no reasons to support the assertion that he was dead.

In the epistle to the Smyrnæans (§ 6.) mention is made of certain visible princes who shall be judged if they do not believe in Jesus Christ; but it is not probable, that Ignatius should speak thus of the kings and emperors of his time. To which Dupin justly replies, that Tertullian and Justin have declared as much of the emperors of their time, and that, too, in the presence of the emperors themselves. Besides (says he) it is not necessary to understand the word *αρχοντες* of emperors and princes only; since it may signify *all that are intrusted with any authority.**

In

* The mistake of the objectors here and in the following passage most probably arose from consulting the old Latin version only; which reads *principes* as the meaning of *αρχοντες*, and *poenitantes* as that of *μετανοησαστες*. And yet, if the whole passage be considered, it will be found to contain absurdities which could hardly come from the pen of Ignatius. Let the reader judge by the following translation of Wake.

P

“ Let

In the epistle to the Philadelphians (§ 3.) he speaks of penitents who were publicly received by the church; whereas (say the objectors) in the primitive ages, those who had once fallen, were not afterwards readmitted into the communion of the church; neither was there any penance which ended in reconciliation. To which Dupin replies, that there is nothing in this epistle which relates to *public* penitents; * and that it is certain

“ Let no man deceive himself; both *the things which are in heaven, and the glory of angels, and principalities, (αρχοντες rulers)* whether visible or invisible; if they believe not in the blood of Jesus Christ, it shall be to them condemnation.”

What have *the things which are in heaven, and the glory of angels*, to do in this place? is it likely that they should not believe in the blood of Christ? This certainly renders the passage very suspicious.

* And certainly there is not; the whole passage being thus; Οσοι αν ΜΕΤΑΝΟΗΣΑΝΤΕΣ ελθωσιν επι την ενοτητα της εκκλησιας, ειλοι θεε εσονται, ινα ωσι καλα Ιησυν Χριστον ζωντες. *As many as repent and return to union with the church, so as to live according to the example of Jesus Christ,*

certain that heretics and schismatics returning to the church were always readmitted. Nay (says he) *Morinus evidently proves that in the two first centuries absolution was granted more easily than in the third.* It is a pity that Dupin did not add the reason, which was plainly, that *there was much less of ecclesiastical tyranny in these centuries than in the third and following.*

These appear to me to be the only objections to which Dupin returns answers in any respect satisfactory. The others, which are

Christ, these shall be [the children] of God. A sentiment, which, with me, instead of leading to a suspicion of the inauthenticity of those epistles, would afford a strong presumption in their favour. But, alas! such sentiments are not very common in them.

If it were worth while to bestow criticism upon such compositions, I should suppose the order of the words ought to have been, *Οσοι αν μετανοησαντες, &c. ----- εκκλησιας, ινα ωσι καλα Ιησυν Χριστον ζωντες, ειλοι Θεοεσονται;* and in this manner I have translated the passage.

chiefly taken from the nature of the epistles themselves, he by no means succeeds in removing. These I will endeavour to state to you with all possible fairness.

1. The style of these epistles is full of swelling expressions, and affected epithets, and the inscriptions long and pompous; which is very far from the simplicity of the apostolic times.

This Dupin denies; but yet acknowledges there are in them *epithets and compound words*; but that this agrees with the Asiatic style, which is generally more *florid* than that of other nations. He instances also Clement's epistle as having the same epithets.

Not to remark on the obvious contradiction that a style may be simple and florid at the same time, Mr. Dupin seems to have forgotten that the apostles were Asiatics as well as Ignatius; and yet their style is plain and simple. Even St. Paul's, which is more artificial than that of the other apostles, has by no means those florid, and, I may say, bombastic

bombastic* expressions, which are found in the epistles of Ignatius. The same may be said of Clement's epistle. And can it be thought that one, who received his doctrine immediately from the apostles, and who therefore must wish to form himself as much as possible, on their model, would abandon their mode of expression, and adopt one entirely different from, and even contrary to theirs? Let a judgment be formed from the inscription of the epistle, which has given occasion to the correspondence between us.

“ Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to
 “ the church at Ephesus in Asia, blessed in
 “ the greatness of God the Father, by his
 “ fulness; predestinated before all ages
 “ (πρὸ αἰώνων) to be for ever for a glory, per-

* Instances of these are innumerable. Αἰγιαπηλή, ἀξιαγνή, ἀξιοεπισκευή, ἀξιοθαύματα, ΑΞΙΟΘΕΟΣ, ἀξιομακαριστή, &c. ἱεροδιδασκαλίες, ἱεροδοξίαι, ΘΕΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ, ΘΕΟΜΑΚΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΑΤΟΣ, ΘΕΟΠΡΕΣΒΥΤΗΣ, &c. Θεοφοροι, ναυφοροι, Χριστοφοροι, ἀγιοφοροι, &c. &c.

“manent, unchangeable, united, and elect-
 “ed in the true passion, in the will of the
 “Father, and of Jesus Christ our God, [to
 “the church at Ephesus] most worthy of
 “being blessed, abundant salutation, (ἀναισθη-
 “χαρπει) in Jesus Christ, and in immaculate
 “grace.”

Does this resemble, *Paul an apostle of
 Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints
 who are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in
 Christ Jesus; grace be to you, and peace,
 from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus
 Christ?*

2. In the epistle to the Magnesians, § 8.
 the expression, the *eternal word proceeded not
 from silence, or from own*, is levelled at the
 Valentinians who entertained this opinion;
 but Valentinus did not flourish till after the
 time of Ignatius.*

To

* Valentinus came to Rome in the time of Hyginus,
 A. C. 150. was in his highest eminence in the reign of
 Antoninus Pius; A. C. 153, and continued till the time
 of Anicetus, A. C. 162. Of consequence, since Igna-
 tius

To this Dupin returns a most unsatisfactory answer. He produces a passage from Augustin, and one from Fulgentius, both which having, as he supposes, no particular reference to the Valentinians, the passage in question therefore may have none. But this is merely *gratis dictum*; for it is not unlikely but both these passages may be allusions to the Valentinian heresy. And if they are not they bear no resemblance to this passage of Ignatius.*

tius died about 116, there is little ground to suppose that he could know any thing of Valentinus's opinions. See Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. IV. cap. x. xi.

* *Quod est* (says Augustin. Homil. in Jesu Christi nat) *hoc verbum?* *Quod dicturus antea, non SILEBAT; quo dicto non SILUIT qui dicebat.* And Fulgent. (lib. III. ad Trajan. cap. xxviii.) *Idem verbum nullo potuit coerceri SILENTIO, quia ipse patris est sempiterna locutio.* But any one may see the difference between these and Εἰς Θεοῦ ἐστιν ὁ φανερωσας ἑαυτον δια Ιησὺ Χριστὸν τὸ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ λογιζομεναι, καὶ ἀπο ΣΙΓΗΣ ΠΡΟΕΛΘΩΝ. In the same sense the Valentinians used προβαλλεσθαι ἀπο σιγῆς, which, according to Dupin, was their more usual expression.

He also affirms that Valentinus and his disciples did not say that the *word* came from *silence*, but from the *spirit and the truth*. But this is an evasion unworthy of Dupin. For the *spirit* and the *truth* came from *silence*, according to the Valentinians.* Did not then

* “ Dicunt (Valentiniani) esse quendam in invisibili-
 “ bus & inenarrabilibus altitudinibus perfectum Æonem
 “ qui ante fuit. Hunc autem et proarchen & prepatora,
 “ et Bython vocant: esse autem illum invisibilem, et
 “ quem nulla res capere possit. Cum autem à nullo
 “ caperetur, et esset invisibilis, sempiternus, et inge-
 “ nitus, in silentio et in quiete multa fuisse in immensis
 “ Æonibus. Cum ipso autem fuisse et Ennoean, quam
 “ etiam Charin et Sigen vocant, et aliquando voluisse à
 “ semetipso emittere hunc Bythum, initium omnium et
 “ velut semen. Prolationem hanc præmitti volunt, et
 “ eam deposuisse quasi in vulva ejus quæ cum eo erat,
 “ Sige. Hunc autem suscepisse semen hoc, et præg-
 “ nantem factam generasse Nun, similem et æqualem ei
 “ qui emiserat, & solum capientem magnitudinem patris.
 “ Nun autem hunc unigenitum vocant, et patrem, &
 “ initium omnium. Una autem cum eo emissam veri-
 “ tatem, et hanc esse primam & primogenitam Pytha-
 “ goricam quaternationem, quam et radicem omnium
 “ dicunt.

then the *word* also come from the same? This therefore is decisive against the authenticity of these epistles.

Dupin however alledges, that the opinion concerning *silence* was prior to the time of Valentinus, because he revived the errors of the Gnostics. But though Valentinus may have done this, it does not follow that he had no opinions peculiar to himself; and that this concerning *fige* or *silence* is so, is plain from the passage already quoted from Irenæus.

There is indeed a passage in Eusebius,* in which he censures Marcellus for reviving the opinion that *silence* (*ἡσυχία*) coexisted with God; and which he represents as *the same as*

“dicunt. Est enim Bythus et Sige, deinde Nus et Alethia. Sentientem autem unigenitum hunc in quæ prolatus est, emisisse et ipsum Logon et Zoen patrem omnium eorum, qui post se futuri essent, et initium et formationem universi pleromatis.” Irenæus adv. Hæres. lib. I. cap. 1. sub init.

* De Theolog. Eccles. lib. II. cap. ix. p. 114. (ad fin. Demonstrat. Evangelic. Edit. Colon. 1688.)

the

the opinion of the ringleader of atheistical heretics, who expressly declares, GOD AND SILENCE WAS. This ringleader Dupin looks upon to be Simon Magus. But this does not appear from the tenour of the passage. It is rather to be supposed that Valentinus must be alluded to here, especially as Eusebius, who was well acquainted with Irenæus's writings, could not be ignorant both that Irenæus expressly makes this a distinguishing tenet of Valentinus, and that Valentinus was the most eminent among those who had the appellation of Heretics given them. And indeed were it allowed that this passage has a reference to Simon Magus, does it not appear from the manner in which Eusebius expresses himself, that this is one of the *Odia Theologica*, which are generally and justly regarded as mere unfounded declamation? It was so much the fashion among the fathers to ascribe all false tenets to Simon Magus, that they frequently made him accountable for more than he was guilty of. Is it not very problematical whether he ever attempted

tempted to propagate heresy? If he did, how is it that we read nothing of this circumstance in the New Testament? Is it supposable, if he really opposed the apostolic doctrines, that no notice would be taken of him, more than the short story in the acts of the apostles? The silence of scripture on this head, affords a strong presumption, that the errors ascribed to Simon Magus, are more properly the effect of prejudice against him, than founded on any facts properly authenticated.

3. In the epistle to the Romans, (§ 5.) we find this expression, *that he was led by the leopards, which are soldiers*. This explication is needless, and the comparison childish. Mr. Dupin thinks the similitude very natural, and the explication necessary. But a similitude expressed as this is, like a pure metaphor, and which is followed by a lifeless gloss, can be neither natural nor necessary. Indeed, if Mr. Dupin had rendered the original properly, the emptiness of the clause would have been apparent at once.

The

The whole sentence is a continued string of foolish witticism.

“ From Syria to Rome I am fighting with
“ wild beasts by land and by sea, night and
“ day, bound by ten leopards, which is a
“ band of soldiers.”*

The word *λεοπαρδο* is not Greek, but Latin only in Greek characters. This is very suspicious, and tends the same way as other Latin words in those epistles to a presumption that the Greek of the smaller epistles is a mere translation from some forged Latin copy. And this copy is probably that which is now extant under the name of *Vetus Interpretatio*. For in this the word

* *Απο Συριας μεχρι Ρωμης θηριομαχῳ, δια γης και θαλασσης, νυκτι και ημερας, δεδεμεν δεκα λεοπαρδοις, ο επι ιρασιων ταγμα.* If I am not mistaken, I have somewhere met with a conjecture that *λεπαδνοις* should be read instead of *λεοπαρδοις*, and *ο επι ιρασιων ταγμα* is an interpolation. But the common reading is confirmed from the interpolated epistle, the old Latin version, and Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. lib. III. cap. xxxvi.) who cites this passage. It seems probable that Eusebius had taken very little pains to determine the authenticity of these epistles.

Leopardis

Leopardis is used; a word unknown in any writings prior to the acts of Perpetua and Felicitas,* who suffered martyrdom in the beginning

* Dupin says that Spartianus, in his *Life of Geta* (ap. Hist. August. Scriptor. p. 425. Edit. Schrevel. 1661.) exhibits it as an *old word* even in his time. But this does not appear from the passage in which it occurs. What Spartianus says, is, that it was a custom with Geta to ask the grammarians, as they pretended to exactness in language, what were the proper words by which the actions of particular animals might be expressed. For instance, says he, “ must we use *balo* to express the cry “ of a lamb, *rugio*, the noise of a lion; *ricio* that of a “ leopard, &c. Prove to me from the ancients whether “ these or others are the proper words.” This is the meaning of the passage. So that the expression *de veteribus approbare*, has a relation to *riciant*, &c. and not to *leopardi*, and the other names of animals. These names therefore may have been no older than the time of Geta, or even of Spartianus, though the verbs expressing their actions be of an earlier date. The passage is hardly worth transcribing, and therefore I will subjoin only just enough of it to give a proper view of the sentiment which it conveys.

“ Familiare illi fuit has quæstiones grammaticis proponere, ut dicerent singula animalia *quomodo vocem*
“ *emitterent*

beginning of the third century: which is enough to show that both the Greek and the Latin copies of these epistles must be later than the time of Ignatius.

4. The

“*emitterent velut agni balant, porcelli grunnuunt, &c.—*

“*leones rugiunt, leopardi rictant, elephanti barriunt, &c.*

“*—easque de veteribus approbare.*”

Festus also has the word *leopardus*, in a work which is supposed to be abridged from Verrius Flaccus who lived in the times of Augustus and Tiberius. But if it were used so early, how is it that it never occurs in any writer before the third century? Particularly whence is it that Pliny himself, in his Natural History (lib. VIII. cap. xvi.) where he has occasion to speak of an animal to which the word *leopardus* would be peculiarly applicable, never makes use of it? Can it be supposed, if the word was known to him, that he would not employ it, where it was so much wanted? The sense too in which Festus uses the word, is very different from that of Ignatius; and if it were not; since it is well known that he took great liberties with the work of Flaccus, by striking out a vast number of words, and criticising the rest in a manner not favourable to Flaccus's reputation, (See Biograph. Dict. in Voc. Festus) little dependence can be placed on the authority of a passage which more probably

4. The author of the epistles ascribed to Ignatius, cites in the epistle to the Smyrnæans, a sentence concerning Jesus Christ, taken from the gospel according to the Hebrews. Who can believe this of Ignatius?

To this Dupin replies, that “it was not
“unusual among the ancients. St. Jerom
“gives us the same passage of St. Ignatius,
“and Papias has likewise quoted the gospel
“according to the Hebrews.”—“St. Jude
“also cites the book of Enoch.”

On

bably proceeded from Festus himself, than from the author he pretended in such a manner to abridge.

The same remarks as are here made on *Leopardus* may be applied to *εξεμπλαριον* (Ad Smyrn. § 12. Ad Ephes. § 2. Ad Trallian. § 3.) *δεσεριωρ*, *δεποσιλα*, and *αυκεπλα* (Ad Polycarp, § 6.); the first of which, according to Suicer (Thesaur. in v. *εξεμπλαριον*) does not occur before the time of Maximus the monk, who lived in the fourth century; and the whole passage in which *δεσεριωρ* is found is pronounced by the same author to be spurious; plainly because the word itself is of late date: for there is nothing in the sentiment unworthy even of an apostle. “Please (says the author of the epistle) him under whom
“ye serve as soldiers; from whom also ye receive your
“pay.

On which it may be observed; that if this remark was made on the writings of one who had not enjoyed the same advantage of conversing with the apostles as Ignatius had; it would have no weight in determining the authenticity or spuriousness of the works ascribed to him; but, as he is supposed to have been well acquainted with the doctrines of the first preachers of christianity, it is hardly to be imagined that he could know so little of the books which they wrote as to mistake a spurious passage for the genuine production

“ pay. Let no one of you be found a deserter.” (See Suic. Thef. sub. Voc. *δωρεῖσθαι*). Of the next passages in which are found *δωρεῖσθαι*, and *ἀντιπῆλαι*, the same judgment therefore may be formed. The point to which these instances plainly tend, is that these epistles were probably not extant in their present state before the fourth century; that they were written by one who understood very little Greek, and have all the appearance of being a bad Greek version from a spurious, or at least, a highly interpolated, Latin copy.

In the epistle to the Smyrnæans (§ 6.) the word *ἐλεποδοξίας* occurs. Was this word known in the time of Ignatius?

of

of an inspired writer. The instance of the forged writing quoted in Jude's epistle, instead of affording an argument in favour of Ignatius's epistles, bears hard on the authenticity of this epistle itself, and was very probably one reason why it was reckoned by the ancient christians among those books which were called by the name of *αγιστολογουμενοι* or disputed.

These remarks infer, it may be said, the inauthenticity of the very gospel, which I have been all along contending for, as the genuine gospel of St. Matthew. And I acknowledge, they imply that the passage which Ignatius is supposed to quote, was no part of St. Matthew's gospel, though it may have been in that of the Hebrews. But what is the argument which this naturally suggests? Certainly neither more nor less than that the epistle ascribed to Ignatius was written later than the time when this interpolation crept into the Hebrew gospel; and, as it is not credible that this should be so early as the apostolic age, in which the

Q

books

books of scripture must have fallen into the hands of Ignatius, he cannot have expressed such a sentiment, as is here ascribed to him, and consequently the author of this epistle, whoever he be, must have existed at a later, probably, a much later period, when numerous corruptions had made their way into the original Hebrew gospel.

5. The desire of suffering martyrdom expressed by Ignatius (Ad Ephes. § 1. ad Rom. § 4.) is too excessive. But this conduct Dupin commends; not reflecting on the caution which was used by Christ and his apostles, whose examples could not but have been directly before the eyes of Ignatius, and to whose instructions on this head he would certainly have paid the most implicit obedience. See Matt. x. 23. xii. 14—16. xiv. 12, 13. Mark iii. 6, 7. John vii. 1. viii. 59. xi. 53, 54. Acts ix. 23—25. xxix. 30. and in other places. See also Rom. xv. 30, 31.

6. Of nearly the same kind is his determination to undergo martyrdom, though he expresses

expresses himself as persuaded that the Romans could have prevented it. (Ad Rom. § 1, 2.)

To this Dupin replies, that " Ignatius
 " does not declare they were absolutely able
 " to deliver him; but only that he was
 " ready to undergo martyrdom, if they did
 " not prevent it; that they might easily do
 " whatever they thought fit; that is, use
 " their endeavours to rescue him from death;
 " but, for his part, he could not find a bet-
 " ter opportunity of suffering for Jesus
 " Christ."

I have given Dupin's whole answer, that it may be seen how far even one who is in other respects candid and impartial, may sometimes strain an argument, to support a favourite cause. The words of Ignatius convey a very different meaning, as is evident from the following literal translation.

" Since, having prayed to God, I have
 " had the fortune to see your God-worthy
 " faces (as indeed I prayed to receive more)
 " being bound in Christ Jesus, I hope to

Q 2

" embrace

“embrace you, if it be the will of God that
 “I be thought worthy to come to this end.
 “For the beginning is well conducted, if I
 “obtain favour, to receive my lot without
 “impediment. For I fear your love, lest it
 “should injure me; for *it is easy for you to*
 “*do what you intend; but it is difficult for me*
 “*to obtain God, if you spare me,*” (that is, if
 “*you prevent me from being put to death*)——
 “For I shall never have such an opportunity,
 “to obtain God; nor can you, if you be
 “silent, be dedicated to a better work. For
 “if you be silent concerning me, I shall be
 “God’s; but if ye love my flesh, I shall
 “have my course to run again.” (Πάλιν
 σπουδαι τρεχων)

Without remarking on the arrant nonsense
 of some of these passages, which plainly de-
 monstrates that they could not have pro-
 ceeded from the friend and companion of the
 apostles, you cannot avoid perceiving, their
 obvious meaning to be, that he was deter-
 mined to prevent any applications from the
 Romans in his favour, though he knew they
 would

would be successful, as he was fully resolved to undergo martyrdom. And this is the sense which Coleterius gives to the passage. “ Martyrii desiderio flagrans B. Ignatius ver-
 “ rebatur ne Romani, vel precibus et ad
 “ Deum et homines, vel pecunia, aut per
 “ vim eum a supplicio eximerent.”

This, therefore, may be referred to the former head, and ranked among the marks of forgery; as it is not supposable that an immediate follower and companion of the apostles would act so contrary to their advice and example.

7. St. Paul does not mention the Ephesians in *all* his epistles; though it is affirmed by the author of this epistle to the Ephesians (§ 12.) that he does. To this Dupin replies, that this is not the meaning of the words *εν παση επισολη*, but that they signify, through *the whole of the epistle* which St. Paul wrote to them. But this interpretation is idle, and nothing to the purpose. For does not every one mention or advert to his correspondent in the whole of the letter which he writes to

Q 3

him,

him, whether he expresses his correspondent's name or not? Besides, this interpretation conveys no compliment; whereas the supposed Ignatius intended a peculiarly great one. It should also be considered, that if Dupin's sense be admitted, the expression would not have been *ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ* but *ἐν πάσῃ τῇ ἐπιστολῇ*.* Any other supposition will make the Greek a mere translation from the Latin.

The words of the original are, "ye are
 " the means of passage† to those who are
 " killed for the sake of God; the co-initiated
 " (*συμμεύσαι*) with Paul, the sanctified, the
 " martyred, the most worthy of blessedness,
 " in whose steps may I be found (when I
 " meet with God) who in every epistle men-
 " tions you in Jesus Christ." Can such stuff
 come from an apostolic father?

* The inscription to the epistle to the Romans has *ἐν πάσῃ ἐνὶ ὅλῃ αἰῶνι* of the same construction as *ἐν πάσῃ ἐπιστολῇ* here.

† Παροδῶ a *passage*, a miserable pun, because he was to *pass through* Ephesus in his way to Rome.

8. He

8. He declares that he saw Jesus Christ (ad Smyrn. § 3.) which Chrysostom says, is not true. But, says Mr. Dupin, this is not the meaning of the passage: Ignatius asserts only that he *knew* and believed the *real incarnation of Jesus Christ*.

Of the justice of Mr. Dupin's assertion let a judgment be formed by a literal interpretation of the passage. "For *I knew him*" (says Ignatius) *in the flesh after his resurrection*, and believe him to be now in existence.* And when he came to Peter and his companions, he said to them, take, feel me, and see, for I am not an incorporeal dæmon."

As Mr. Dupin could not be insensible that this is the proper sense of the words, he has another solution of the difficulty. "It was not impossible (says he) for Ignatius to have seen our Saviour."

* Εγω γαρ και μετα την αναστασιν εν σαρκι αυτον οίδα, και πισευω οντα. The contrast between οίδα and πισευω shows plainly that the interpretation given by Dupin to this passage is unfounded; because this interpretation confounds them both together.

Ignatius, according to Dupin, suffered martyrdom A. D. 107,* and was then about eighty years old. Supposing Christ to have been thirty-four years old when he was crucified, Ignatius could then have been only seven years old. Is it credible, on this supposition, that he should take so particular a notice of what Christ said? If the duration of Christ's ministry was one year only; then Ignatius could have been no more than *four* years old; which renders the difficulty still greater.

But if, as † Dr. Pearson has proved, Trajan was not at Antioch till the year 115; Ignatius could not suffer before 116. On which supposition, he not only, could never have seen Christ; but he was not even born till two years after Christ's resurrection. On every principle, therefore, the epistle in question, is a plain forgery.

* Dupin's Biblioth. Patr. first century, p. 37.

† Pearson. Diss. de anno quo Ignatius erat condemnatus ap. Ruffel. Patr. Apost. vol. II. p. 310, &c.

9. He gives an account of certain heretics who abstained from the eucharist. (ad Smyrn. § 7.) Now, says Mr. Daillé, there were not any such in the time of St. Ignatius.

To this Dupin can scarcely make any reply. He says, indeed, that these heretics were the Docetæ, who believed that Jesus Christ suffered only in appearance. But this is nothing to the purpose, as it does not appear from any accounts, that either they or any early heretics abstained from the eucharist. Nor does the passage itself lead to such a conclusion. On the contrary, the idea which it conveys, is, that there were then existing persons, "who did not acknowledge " that the eucharist was the FLESH of Christ, "*which flesh* suffered for us." This cannot be the language of the earliest ages of Christianity.

10. He promises to send a book to the Ephesians (ad Ephes. § 20.); but how could he do it, when he was going to be put to death?

To

To this Dupin replies, that *δεύτερον βιβλίδιον* means a *second letter* (which it certainly does) and observes that "he might well hope to write another, having had the liberty to write the former."

But I do not see the probability of this. The contrary seems rather the most likely; that, as he was continually approaching towards Rome, the prospect of his writing would be less and less every day.

Indeed the whole tenour of the passage shows plainly that it could not come from the pen of Ignatius. For the subjects which he proposes to treat of in his *δεύτερον βιβλίδιον* are such as must necessarily employ much time and writing. "If Christ, by your prayer, will think me worthy, and it be his will, I will, in addition to this epistle, lay open to you in the second book, which I am about to write to you, the dispensation which I have begun with respect to the new man, Jesus Christ; in his faith, and in his love, in his suffering, and in his resurrection, especially

"cially if the Lord should reveal it to me;
 "because you all come together man by
 "man by grace from his name (ἐξ ονομασίου)
 "in one faith, and in Jesus Christ, who by
 "the flesh was of the race of David, the son
 "of man, and the son of God; that you
 "may obey the bishop and the presbytery,
 "with an unalienated mind (ἀπερισπασῶ διανοία)
 "breaking one and the same bread, which
 "is the medicine of immortality, an anti-
 "dote, so that you may not die, but live by
 "Jesus Christ for ever."

Such a plan of a letter could never be formed by Ignatius in the circumstances in which he then was.

Indeed it is worthy of observation, that
 not one of these epistles has any proper rela-
 tion either to what might be supposed to be
 the state of Ignatius's mind, or to the pecu-
 liar situation in which he was placed. In-
 stead of laying open to the churches, to which
 he writes, the feelings which the cause in
 which he was engaged, and the immediate
 prospect of a dreadful death could not but
 excite

excite in his mind, and founding on these such exhortations as might encourage his fellow-christians to persevere with fortitude in the same profession; the general tenour of these epistles is to inculcate the proper Deity of Jesus Christ,* a doctrine unknown to the apostles,

* These high terms, used by the supposed Ignatius concerning Christ, naturally lead to the consideration of a similar passage in *Clemens Romanus* (ad Corinthios § 16.) where he is supposed to speak of Christ as το σκηπτον της μεγαλωσυνης τε θεου.

We have one MS. copy only of *Clemens*, the Alexandrian. In this the words here mentioned begin a new clause, and are connected not with the preceding, but with the following ones, referring expressly to Christ only. But who will say that this MS. is without errors and false readings? No one who has looked into Wettstein's *Prolegomena*, can be so much prejudiced as not to acknowledge that it has numbers of corruptions. And the passage before us, according to the reading of this MS. is little better than nonsense. To call Christ the *SCEPTRE of the majesty of God*, is at the best singularly uncouth and awkward. To begin a sentence also with the word of apposition instead of that which expresses the principal subject, is not elegant, nor do I think it very common.

On

apostles, his instructors; and to encourage such an implicit obedience to ecclesiastical rulers, as would prove the disgrace, and end in the ruin of that very gospel, for which he was then sacrificing his life. This single consideration therefore would be sufficient to stamp indelibly the mark of imposture on all these epistles.

II. There appears to be much arrogance and affectation in these epistles; the author boasts that he has the knowledge of celestial

On these accounts I am inclined to adopt the following conjectural emendation :

Ταπεινοφρονειων γαρ εστιν ὁ Χριστός, ἐκ ἐπαιρομενων ἐπι το ποιμανιον αὐτης το ΚΑΤΟΠΤΡΟΝ της μεγαλωσυνης τῆ Θεῃ. Ο Κυριος ἡμων Χριστος Ιησους ἐκ ἤλθεν ἐν νομῷ αλαζονειας, &c. — “ For Christ is of those who are humble-minded, not of those who rise against his flock, “ which is the mirror of the majesty of God,” (that is, *by the wonderful progress of the gospel, in which the divine majesty and greatness are clearly reflected.*) “ Our Lord “ Jesus Christ did not come in the pompous show of “ insolence,” &c. There is little difference between ΣΚΗΠΤΡΟΝ and ΚΤΙΠΤΡΟΝ, which was probably the contracted manner in which κατοπλρον was written in the oldest MSS.

things ;

things; and that he knew the orders, offices, and stations of the angels.

All this, Dupin thinks, might be asserted by an ancient bishop, that had acquired the reputation of Ignatius. For my part, I think it more than *any* bishop has a right to claim, even though he should *affirm*, as Dupin says of Ignatius, *no more than what had been before said by St. Paul.* At least, it should seem, that no one, who was not equal to St. Paul, has a right to make such pretensions. And will any one say that Ignatius was such a person?

The passage which contains this claim is the following: (ad Trallian. § 4, 5.) “I have
“much knowledge in God. But I keep my-
“self within bounds, that I may not perish by
“boasting.—Cannot I write of celestial things?
“But I fear lest I should lay a hurt in the way
“of you who are babes.” —*“ For though I
“ am

* Και γαρ εγω, & καθολι δεδεμαι, και δυναμεν τα
επερανα, και τας τοποθεσιας τας αγγελικας, και τας
συτασεις τας αρχονικας, ΟΡΑΤΑ ΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΑΟΡΑΤΑ.
ΠΑΡΑ

“ am bound, I have power in heavenly
 “ things, and in the positions of the places
 “ of angels, and in the constitution of powers,

ΠΑΡΑ ΤΟΤΤΟ, ἡδὴ καὶ μαθητὴς εἰμι. Very modest indeed ! I have power over *all things visible and invisible. Except this*, I am a mere novice. Οὐ καθόλου δεδεμῆαι, *not in proportion as I am bound. That is, though I am bound, my power is not lessened in this case.*

Dr. Wake is here plainly ashamed of the good faint ; and therefore gives a version directly contrary to the meaning of the passage. “ For even I myself, although
 “ I am in bonds, yet am not *therefore able to understand*
 “ heavenly things,” &c. As if *being in bonds* would have *given him* this extraordinary knowledge.

I have translated the words δυναμεν^Θ τὰ ἐπερᾶνα, by *I have power in heavenly things* ; which seems to me the most natural interpretation ; καὶ being understood before τὰ ἐπερᾶνα ; but as the *Vetus Interpres* renders it, *Et possum quidem intelligere cœlestia*, in which he is followed by *Cotelerius*, and with which the correspondent passage in the interpolated epistle agrees, which reads δυναμαι ΝΟΕΙΝ τὰ ἐπερᾶνα ; I have no objection to taking the words in this sense, and reading, *Though I am bound, I have power to UNDERSTAND HEAVENLY things*, &c. For, even in this sense, the passage implies such a claim to supernatural knowledge as the apostles themselves never exhibited.

“ in

“in things visible, and things invisible.
 “Excepting this, I am yet a learner: for
 “many things are wanting to us, that we
 “may not be wanting as to God.”

I believe, it may be safely said, that a more impudent claim was never set up by mortal man. Can this be from one who was the friend and companion of the humble apostles?

12. In these epistles a distinction is plainly made between bishops and priests; which did not obtain before the third century.

The latter part of this assertion Dupin denies; alledging that many instances occur, prior to the third century, of this distinction. That both the names were sometimes used to signify the same, and sometimes different offices in the church, is, what I believe no one can controvert: but that there was a regular distribution of ministers into three distinct classes before the third century, no one can pretend to assert on any evidence from antiquity.* It cannot therefore be

* See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. Cent. I. part II. chap. ii.
 imagined

imagined that these epistles, in which this distinction is accurately observed, could have proceeded from one who lived before it was made; and consequently, they could not have had Ignatius for their author.

But even though it were allowed that this distinction did exist in his time; can we suppose that the heads of the church were advanced to that extravagant height of spiritual tyranny which prevails in all these epistles?

“ * It is well to regard *God* and the *bishop*.

“ He who honours the bishop is honoured

“ by God; he who does any thing without

“ the bishop’s knowledge, *serves the devil*.

“ † The *God-worthy bishop*, and most *divinely-*

“ *venerable presbytery*.”

He commends Sotion, because † “ he
“ obeys the bishop as the *grace of God*, and
“ the presbytery as the *law of Jesus Christ*.”

In the same epistle || he exhorts the Magnesians to “ do all things in the unanimity

* Ad Smyrn. § 9.

† § 12.

‡ Ad Magnesios, § 2.

|| § 6.

“ of God, the *bishop* *presiding in the place of*
 “ God, and the *presbyters in the place of the*
 “ *assembly of the apostles*, and the deacons—
 “ as having intrusted to them the ministry
 “ (*διακονιαν*) of Jesus Christ, *who was with the*
 “ *Father before all ages* (*ὅς προ αἰώνων παρὰ Πατρὶ ἦν*)
 “ and has appeared in the end of them.
 “ (*καὶ ἐν τελευτῇ ἐφάνη.*)”

“ * Whosoever are of God and Jesus
 “ Christ, these are *with the bishop.*” “ † The
 “ spirit has proclaimed, saying these things;
 “ *do nothing without the bishop.*”

“ † When ye are subject *to the bishop as to*
 “ *Jesus Christ*, ye appear to me to live not
 “ according to the manner of men, but ac-
 “ cording to Jesus Christ.” “ || Be subject
 “ to the *presbytery* as to the *apostles* of Jesus
 “ Christ.” “ ¶ Let all reverence the *deacons*
 “ as

* Ad Philadelphenses, § 3.

† § 7.

† Ad Trallianos, § 2.

|| ibid.

¶ § 3. The text here seems to be corrupted; per-
 haps it should be *τις διακονες, και τον επισκοπον, ὡς*
Ιησουν Χριστον οὐλα υἱον τε Πατρὸς, reverence the *deacons*
and

"as Jesus Christ, as also the bishop being the
 "son of the Father, and the presbyters, as the
 "assembly of God, and as the bond of the
 "apostles."

I can easily conceive these epistles to have been written by a bishop, but "*not such a bishop as Ignatius.*"*

I imagined, from the badness of the Greek, and the use of the Latin words above mentioned, that the writer of these epistles was a Latin, who understood little of the Greek language. I am now convinced that he was not only a Latin, but one who regarded the church of Rome as having a pre-eminence over other churches. This may be deduced from the excessive encomiums which are passed on this church, more than on the others to which these epistles are addressed; though even they are complimented to such a degree of fulsome adulation, as they could not help being ashamed of.

and the bishop as Jesus Christ, who is the son of the Father.
 But the corrected passage itself contains the same spiritual pride in it. * Jortin.

The inscription of the epistle to the Romans is as follows.

“ Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the
 “ church of the Romans, which has obtained
 “ mercy by the majesty of the most high
 “ Father, and of Jesus Christ his only son ;
 “ — (*a church*) beloved and enlightened by
 “ the will of him who willeth all things
 “ which are, according to the love of Jesus
 “ Christ our God ; — (*a church*) which has
 “ the precedency* in the district (*ἐν τῷ τόπῳ χάρις*)
 “ of the Romans ; worthy of God, worthy
 “ of excellence, worthy of the greatest hap-
 “ piness, worthy of praise,† worthy of attain-
 “ ing the end it aims at, worthy of purity,
 “ having the pre-eminence in love ; having
 “ the name of Christ, having the name of
 “ the Father ; which also I salute in the
 “ name of Jesus Christ, the son of the Fa-
 “ ther : to those who are united in flesh and
 “ spirit in every command of his, who are

* This was not before the third century. See Mosheim, Cent. III. Part II. chap. ii.

† ἀξιοπρεπείῃ in Rufel. ἀξιοπρεπείῃ in Coletorius.

“ filled

“ filled with the grace of God without dis-
 “ tinction : (αδιακριτως) and thoroughly puri-
 “ fied from every foreign colour ; (αποδιῦλισμένοις
 “ απο παντός ἑλλοθῆναι χροματι) abundant imma-
 “ culate greeting (πλεῖστα—αμωμως χαιρεῖν) in the
 “ Lord Iesus Christ our God.”

This single inscription detects the whole fraud, and shows the fountain from which it springs.

The last observation is, that these epistles were unknown to Justin, Clemens Alexandrinus, and to all the ancient writers before Eusebius.

To this Dupin replies, that they are cited by Polycarp, Irenæus, and Origen; all which is very true; but little to the proof of their authenticity.

For there is great reason to believe that the epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, in which (§ 13.) Ignatius is mentioned, is a mere forgery;* and if it were not, yet as no passage

* This, I think, can hardly be doubted, if any one compares the ninth and thirteenth sections of this epistle

passage is particularly referred to, the utmost which could be concluded, would be, that Ignatius had written some epistles, but what they were, or whether those which are at present extant are his, would still remain uncertain. So that this testimony does not

epistle together, in the former of which Ignatius is spoken of as being *dead*; in the latter, as *alive*. In § 9. Polycarp is supposed to say, "I beseech you all therefore, to obey the word of righteousness, and to exercise all patience, which ye have seen with your own eyes, not only in the blessed Ignatius, and Zosimus, and Rufus, but also in others who are of you; and in Paul himself and the other apostles; persuaded, that ALL THESE have run not in vain, but in faith and righteousness; and that they ARE with the Lord, with whom they have suffered, in the place due to them."

But in § 13. he says, "you and Ignatius have written to me, that if any one comes into Syria, he may bring your letters," &c.

Can any two passages be more inconsistent?

In § 9. Εἰς τὸν ὀφειλομένον τόπον is for ἐν τῷ ὀφειλομένῳ τόπῳ (See Viger. de Idiotism. Græc. p. 531.). I cannot help thinking that this epistle, as well as those of Ignatius, are merely bad Greek versions from a forged Latin original.

affect

affect a single argument which has been hitherto produced.

But this is not all. As it has been shown already that the epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp is spurious; which is also acknowledged by Usher and others; it follows of consequence, that the corresponding epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians is equally so. There is therefore reason to think that one was fabricated to support the other, and that the forger of the epistle of Ignatius could have easily named the author of that which is ascribed to Polycarp. Indeed they seem both so well calculated to support each other, that such a coincidence can be hardly the effect of two different, and unconnected persons.

The testimony of Irenæus* is so far direct as it shows plainly that the expressions which

* Quemadmodum quidam de nostris dixit, propter martirium, in deum adjudicatus ad bestias; Quoniam frumentum sum Christi, et per dentes bestiarum molor, ut mundus panis dei inveniar. Irenæ. adv. Hæres. lib. N. cap. xxviii.

he quotes, came from some one who was condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts, and were probably therefore those which Ignatius made use of. But this is all. For Irenæus gives no reason to conclude that they were contained in any written composition. If, therefore, the epistles which are called Ignatius's can be proved to be spurious by sufficient arguments, which seems to me to have been already done, it is easy to imagine that the forger would avail himself of such expressions as were found in early writers, in order to give his impostures the appearance of authenticity.

As to the quotations from Origen, which are two only; one occurs in a work* the authenticity of which is very dubious.† Some ascribing it to Ambrose, and others to Peter

* Origen on the Canticles. Prolog. Denique memini aliquem Sanctorum dixisse, Ignatium nomine, de Christo; *Meus autem amor crucifixus est*: nec reprehendi eum pro hoc dignum judico.

† See Dupin Biblioth. Patr. third century, p. 119.

Lombard :

Lombard: and the other,* which may be called genuine, is a translation by Jerom.

So that Eusebius is the only writer whose authority may be produced as affording any appearance that the epistles which are at present regarded as Ignatius's were really his. And this authority will have little weight with any one who considers that Eusebius admitted as genuine the forged epistles of Abgarus and Jesus Christ,† and the empty tale of the Sibylline Acrostich.‡

There

* Eleganter in cujusdam Martyris epistola scriptum reperi; Ignatium dico, episcopum Antiochiæ, post Petrum, Secundum; qui impersecutione, Romæ pugnavit ad bestias: Principem Sæculi hujus latuit virginitas Mariæ. Origen in Luc See also Dupin ub. sup. p. 120.

† Euseb. Hist. Eccles. lib. I. cap. xiii.

‡ Vita. Constantin. lib. V. cap. xviii. xix. ibid. chap. xx. He also regards Virgil's fourth Eclogue as a prophecy of Christ. He likewise tells the silly tale of Narcissus's miracles (Hist. Eccles. lib. VI. cap. ix.) and in his account of the martyrs of Palestine, he informs us that
*"in fair weather the pillars of the public buildings dis-
 tilled drops as it were of tears; the squares were sprink-
 led"*

There is therefore no sufficient reason to be assigned for regarding the epistles of Ignatius as authentic, but there is every presumption why they should be looked upon as either mere forgeries, or perhaps as so much interpolated, that the true text is in a manner lost in the interpolation.

With respect to the martyrdom of Ignatius, though there are certainly several im-

*“led with water, though there was no rain; so that it
“was generally said, that the earth wept through ab-
“horrence of the cruel practices which were committed
“against the christians.”* (See Euseb. de Martyr Palæst. cap. ix. p. 425. edit. Reading). One who was so credulous, might easily admit without examination, Ignatius's epistles.—Dr. Jortin indeed endeavours (Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. I. p. 315.) to exculpate Eusebius from the charge of approving the Acrostic of the Sibyll, by observing that the *sentiments* are not Eusebius's but Constantine's. But as they are delivered without any marks of disapprobation in a history composed by Eusebius, I do not see how he is not as accountable for them, as if they had come originally from himself.

If Jortin's remark be allowed, Eusebius will be cleared from the charge in one instance only: the rest will continue in all their force against him,

probabilities

probabilities and even falsehoods mixed with it; the general story may possibly be true. Yet it must be confessed, that to go to Rome from Antioch in Syria, through Asia Minor to Smyrna, instead of sailing to Cyprus, and from thence by Crete to Syracuse or Rhegium; which would be the most likely course, is a very strange kind of navigation, and not to be accounted for even on the supposition that Trajan's design was by exposing Ignatius to the christians in those parts, to strike terror into them. For the very manner of his martyrdom would have been sufficient.

But not to insist upon this. Supposing that Ignatius had been conducted through Asia Minor from Antioch, how shall we account for the course which was afterwards taken? His direct road from Smyrna being what he actually took, to Troas, from thence across the Ægean sea to Neapolis; and from Neapolis by land to Epidamnus, why did he not sail directly across the Adriatic to Brundisium, and proceed from thence

to

to Rome? The plea of the necessity that he should be made a spectacle to the christians, has no place here, for this he would be made more effectually, by this course than by that which is said to have been taken. Is it probable, that he would be made to sail down the Jonian sea, round Sicily, and up again through the Tuscan sea, to Puteoli, and go from thence, by a road of not quite one hundred miles to Rome? Is this consistent with the design for which he was to be conducted through so large a space in Asia?

Why should he be put to death at Rome? In the time of Ignatius, the most numerous body of christians was in Asia, not in Europe; and consequently the end proposed by Trajan in punishing him, would have been more probably answered at Antioch than at Rome.

These appear to me, important difficulties: and added to the plain marks of forgery which occur in the epistles, lead me to think it highly probable, that the whole story is one of those early inventions in which the primitive christians too much indulged themselves,

selves, in order to magnify their zeal, and throw an odium on their persecutors: who had, indeed, without this, enough to answer for.*

We

* There seems to me something incredible, not only in the account of Polycarp's martyrdom, but also of his great age when he suffered. That he should live forty years after Ignatius, whose companion he had been in attending upon St. John, and consequently be not less than a hundred and twenty years old; and yet that he should not die a natural death, is a circumstance, I think, unparalleled. Indeed it does not strike me as at all probable, that the Romans, in their persecution of the christians, should show the most exemplary marks of their resentment against such as by their great age, were, in some measure, incapable of taking part in the extension of the gospel. They would rather direct their vengeance against those active characters who were likely to give them the most trouble, from their spirit, and prospect of long continuance in life.

There is another circumstance still more improbable; that Polycarp, in the year 154, when above a hundred years old, should take a journey from Smyrna to Rome, in order to settle with Anicetus the Roman bishop, the dispute concerning the time of KEEPING EASTER. Much less can we suppose that he should express himself

We are now therefore necessarily reduced to the single testimony of Justin Martyr. But this may more properly make the subject of another letter.

I am, SIR,

Your servant and brother in Chriff,

J. POPE.

self to Marcion in the uncharitable terms ascribed to him, or relate the silly story of St. John and Cerinthus at the Bath. Indeed, will any man of common sense believe, that a hearer of St. John should have any idea of keeping Easter at all, when it is well known that one great design of the gospel, was to abolish all difference of times and seasons?

The whole narrative of the martyrdom of Polycarp is more worthy of being ranked among those of the Romish legend, than of obtaining a place in genuine history. Of this any one may be convinced, by perusing the narrative itself.

LETTER

LETTER VI.

ON THE TESTIMONY OF JUSTIN MARTYR.

SIR,

YOU candidly acknowledge, concerning the testimony of Justin Martyr, that “ if any
 “ well founded objections can be made to it,
 “ they will operate strongly against the mira-
 “ culous conception.*”

Without claiming the performance of your promise, suffer me to lay before you such circumstances, as will, I am persuaded, shake the confidence, which you seem to place in him.

His general character of credulity you admit on the evidence of Dr. Jortin;† whose account, though designed to be favourable

* Appeal, p. 57. *note*.

† See Jortin's Remarks on Ecclesiast. History, vol. II. p. 155—165.

to Justin, clearly proves him to be, what the Doctor says both of him and the other fathers,—"a poor and insufficient guide in things of judgment and criticism, and in the interpretation of the scriptures, and sometimes in points of morality and doctrine;—and that it is better to defer too little, than too much to his decisions."* Of this you will be convinced from the following particulars.

He affirms, that † prophetic gifts existed among christians even in his days; that they exorcised all dæmons and evil spirits, and held them in subjection. ‡ He makes the victory over Amalek, a type of Christ's victory over dæmons, and the powers and

* Jortin. ib. p. 163, 164.

† Πολλα γαρ ἡμιν καὶ μεχοὶ νυν ΠΡΟΦΗΤΙΚΑ χάρισμα εἴη. Justin. Op. p. 308. edit. Paris. 1615.

‡ p. 302. Καὶ νυν ἡμεῖς — τὰ ΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΑ ΠΑΝΤΑ καὶ πνευμάτα πονηρὰ ἐξοριζούμεν, ΤΠΟΤΑΣΣΟΜΕΝΑ ΗΜΙΝ ἐχομεν. See also p. 247.

authorities

authorities of the earth :* he tells us, that the angels transgressing the order in which they were placed, fell in love with women, and begot dæmons, by whom the race of mankind was subdued;† that Isaiah says, evil angels inhabit the land of Tanis in Egypt;‡ and that we ought to pray to God that the evil angel may not seize our soul when it departs from the body.¶ He advances the idle notion, that the ass and the foal which were brought to Christ predicted the conversion of the Jews and Gentiles; the foal, as being without burden representing the latter, and the ass, as subject to be burdened, the former.§ He applies Isaiah

* p. 269.

† p. 44.

‡ p. 305. This is taken from a blundering interpretation of the Septuagint version of Isaiah xxx. 4. *Οτι εισιν εν Τανει ΑΡΧΗΓΟΙ ΑΓΓΕΛΟΙ ΠΟΝΗΡΟΙ*, which Justin quotes without understanding it.

¶ p. 332, 333.

§ *Αμφοτερα γαρ τα ζωα (that is, ονον και πωλον) μελευσαι αγαγειν, προαγγελια ην και απο της συναγωγης υμων αμα τοις απο των εθνων πισυειν επ' αυτον (that is, Χριστον) μελλουσιν, &c. p. 273.*

S

i. 16.

i. 16. *wash ye, make ye clean, &c.* to the washing in the name of God and Jesus Christ, which he calls *illumination*, and gravely tells us, that “the dæmons hearing this washing preached by the prophet, invented *“ablutions and libations.”*” * And what is most surprising, he says expressly, that “the single transgression of David with Uriah’s wife taken in connexion with his repentance, shows that the patriarchs took many wives to themselves, not as FORNICATORS, but that a certain DIVINE DISPENSATION, and ALL MYSTERIES were thus accomplished by them.” † Can you think much credit is due to such a writer as this?

He speaks of the Sibylline books as inspired, and of the Sibyll herself as plainly declaring the coming of Jesus Christ; ‡ makes the *horn* of the *unicorn* a type of the *cross*; ||

* p. 94, 95.

† p. 371, *Οικονομία* signifies a divine dispensation or constitution in ecclesiastical writers. Vide Suicer in Voc. § 2. p. 458, 459, vol. II.

‡ p. 34—36.

|| p. 318.

and

and the *scarlet cord* which the spies gave to Rahab the harlot, a symbol of the *blood of Christ*, because "as she was preserved by
 " means of this cord, so those who have
 " been harlots and unjust, are saved by re-
 " ceiving the remission of their sins. * "

His method of discussing the mystery of the cross, is too curious to be omitted.
 " Consider," says he, " all the things in the
 " world, whether they could be administered,
 " or have any communication with each
 " other, without this form of the cross.
 " The sea could not be passed, unless that
 " trophy called the sail, were preserved in
 " the ship; the earth could not be tilled,
 " without it, for neither diggers nor artifi-
 " cers could do their work, but by instru-
 " ments of this shape. The form of man
 " differs in nothing else from other ani-
 " mals, but in the erection of his body, and
 " the extension of his arms, and the projec-
 " tion of his nose from his forehead, through

* P. 338.

S 2

" which

“ which respiration is made; and which
 “ shows nothing else but the figure of the
 “ cross; in which sense also it is spoken
 “ of by the prophet, *Christ the Lord is the*
*“ breath before our face.”** Where these last
 words, which are taken from Lament. iv. 20.
 (*Septuagint*) are strained by Justin to a sense
 which they were never intended to convey.

I have taken the above passage from Dr
 Middleton; not however without examining
 the original itself; for though the doctor
 was a most ingenious writer, he was not
 always fair in his quotations.† I cannot, how-
 ever,

* See Middleton on the Miraculous Powers, p. 28.
 and Just. Op. p. 90.

† In the controversy between Dr. Middleton and
 Bishop Pearce, occasioned by Waterland's *Scripture*
Vindicated, Bishop Pearce charges Middleton with *fif-*
teen quotations and two historical facts as falsely reported by
him (See *Life of Bishop Pearce* prefixed to his *Comment.*
 on the Four Evangelists, vol. I. p. 34.) and in Dr. Mid-
 dleton's Examination of Dr. Bentley's proposals for
 publishing an edition of the Greek Testament with vari-
 ous readings, I have observed myself such instances of
 unfairness

ever, resist the temptation to add the remark which follows it, because it shows how far some will strain an argument to support a favourite hypothesis.

“ Upon this passage the very pious and
 “ learned Dr. Grabe makes the following
 “ remarks, which I would recommend to
 “ all the zealous admirers of these venerable
 “ saints and purest ages; that the holy martyr
 “ must not be rashly blamed, for an interpreta-
 “ tion so forced and far-fetched; because it was
 “ the prevailing custom of that age, to import
 “ into the sacred text SENSES, WHICH DID NOT
 “ BELONG TO IT.” *

This apology of Dr. Grabe does the holy martyr no great honour.

Justin affirms also that silly story, concerning the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, unfairness and misrepresentation, as will ever reflect disgrace on his memory, and ought in his life-time to have filled his soul with bitter reflexions, that he had been thus the instrument of depriving the world of the best work in which criticism could have been engaged.

* Middleton, ib. p. 28, 29.

ment, " that it was made by seventy elders
 " sent for that purpose from Jerusalem to
 " Egypt, at the request of king Ptolemy;
 " whom that king shut up in as many sepa-
 " rate cells, and obliged them, each to
 " translate the whole Bible apart, and with-
 " out any communication with each other:
 " yet all their several translations were found
 " to agree verbatim from the beginning to
 " the end; and by that means were demon-
 " strated to be of divine inspiration." And
 to raise the greater attention to his story, he
 introduces it, by declaring, " that he is not
 " telling a fable or forged tale; but that he
 " himself had seen at Alexandria the remains
 " of those very cells in which the translators
 " had been shut up." *

" It is certain," says Dr. Middleton,†
 " that there never were any such cells, nor
 " any such translators; and the best excuse

* This paragraph is taken from Middleton, *ibid.*
 p. 37, 38. See also *Just. Op.* p. 13, 14.

† p. 39, 40.

" which

“ which can be made for Justin, is, that he
 “ was imposed upon by some Jews or Chris-
 “ tians of Alexandria, who might show him
 “ some old ruins, under the name of cells;
 “ which his prepossession in favour of the
 “ story, owing to his natural credulity and
 “ want of judgment, made him take to be
 “ really such.”

“ To these specimens of his want of judg-
 “ ment (says the same author*) I might add
 “ several more, from his frequent use of
 “ *fabulous and apocryphal books*, forged by the
 “ first christians, under the names of the
 “ apostles; and likewise from his false and
 “ negligent manner of quoting the genuine
 “ scriptures. Dr. Grabe† has collected se-
 “ veral instances of the first sort, and his
 “ learned editor (Thirlby‡) finds frequent
 “ occasion to animadvert upon the second.”

“ He

* p. 39. † Grabe Spicileg. Patr. tom. I. p. 14.
 327. item. p. 19.

‡ Vide Just. Apol. I. p. 87. quæ disput. de feris
 venenosis, &c. in deserto. it. p. 92. note 6. it. p. 206.
 note 20. it. p. 203. note 16. it. note 18. p. 327.

"He frequently charges the Jews, with
 "having expunged many passages out of the
 "Greek Bibles, in which the character and
 "sufferings of Jesus were clearly described:
 "which charge all the learned of these later
 "ages have found to be wholly groundless."
 —"They have erased," says he, "out of the
 "book of Esdras," (Ezra) "the following words;
 "Esdras said to the people, this passover is
 "our Saviour, and our refuge; and if you
 "will but persuade yourselves, and be con-
 "vinced in your hearts, that we are to
 "humble him in a sign or figure, and after-
 "wards to put our trust in him; this place,
 "shall not be made desolate in all ages, says

Two of the instances mentioned by Grabe are, that,
 at the time of Christ's going down into the Jordan to be
 baptized by John, *a fire was kindled in the river*; for
 which Justin appeals to the writings of the apostles; and
 that Jesus said to his disciples, *among whomsoever I find
 you, among them will I judge you*. Neither of these is to
 be found in the New Testament. For the quotations in
 this paragraph, I depend on Dr. Middleton. The two
 of which I have expressly taken notice, I am myself
 accountable for.

"the

“ the Lord of hosts. But, if you do not
 “ believe in him, nor attend to his preach-
 “ ing, you shall be as dirt to the nations.” *

This passage, instead of having been expunged by the Jews, is merely a christian forgery; not indeed to be charged upon Justin, who was incapable of such deceit; but too credulously admitted by him as a part of scripture.

So in the ninetieth psalm, Justin says it was read, *tell the nations, that the Lord reigned FROM THE TREE*;† and groundlessly charges the Jews with erasing these three last words. He affirms the same with respect to Jerem. xi. 19. which whole verse he accuses them of having expunged;‡ though immediately

* Middleton, p. 42, 43. Just. Oper. p. 297, 298.

† Just. Op. p. 298. See also Middleton, p. 43.

‡ Just. Op. *ibid.* sub. init. *paginae*. *Kai apo tou dia Israēlites lexθεντων ταυτα περιεκοψαν* *εγω ως αρην, &c.* On which Thirlby has this note: Justinus *max* confitebitur nunc locum intactum extitisse in nonnullis Judæorum codicibus, ubi sanè nunc extat in *omnibus* *codicibus* *tum*

diately after he acknowledges that it occurs in *some* of their copies. Indeed it occurs in *all*, and was never erased either by Jews or Christians. For this he is justly regarded by Thirlby as guilty of great negligence and rashness.

He also charges them with expunging another passage from Jeremiah, which does not appear to have ever existed; but, from the nature of the language, seems, probably to have been a christian forgery.*

But what is still more remarkable, is his charging the Romans with human sacrifices in celebrating the mysteries of Saturn:† a charge

tum Græcis tum Hebraicis. Jerem. xi. 19. Nos quoque Judæos fraudis absolvimus, Justinum summæ negligentiae et temeritatis absolvere non possumus.

* Και απο των λογων τε αυτης Ιερεμιας ομοιως ταυτα περιεκοψαν· εμνησθη δε κυριος ο θεος απο Ισραηλ των νεκρων αυτης των κεκοιμημενων εις γην χωμαλιν, και καλεβη προ αυτης ευαγγελισασθαι αυτοις το σωτηριον αυτης. Justin. Oper. p. 298.

† Just. Op. p. 50. Edit. Paris. 1615. p. 128. edit. Thirlby, who has a long note on this passage, in which
he

charge absolutely false, and unsupported by any authority; all the Pagan writers being totally silent as to such sacrifices. And yet Justin advances it with all the confidence of one who had the best evidence in the world for his assertion.

he expresses in plain terms his disbelief of this account, though it was repeated by Cyprian, Tatian, Lactantius, Tertullian, Minutius, Theophilus, Epiphanius, Athanasius, and Prudentius. "Quis (says he) non suspicetur
 "injuriam in hac re non minorem factam Sacris
 "Gentilium a Christianis quam Gentiles vicissim
 "Christianorum ritibus fecerunt, præsertim cum jam
 "diu omnibus nota sit MIRA ET STUPORI FINI-
 "TIMA PATRUM CREDULITAS?" He afterwards quotes a passage from Cyrill, to the same purpose as this in Justin Martyr; and observes; — "De hac
 "re scire velim quid sentiant sagissimi viri Patrum pa-
 "troni? Si audebunt dicere non credere se, rogo
 "quid facturi essent si Justinus hoc scripsisset, cæterique
 "religionis Christianæ defensores alii ex aliis in apolo-
 "gias suas, uti mos iis erat, transtulissent? Quod si ne
 "sic quoque credituros fuisse affirmabunt, orandi sunt,
 "ut quod in re non dissimili facturos se fuisse negent id
 "neque in hac re faciant."

The

The last instance shall be given in the words of Dr. Middleton,* whose account is perfectly just and accurate.

“ In his Apology; addressed to the emperor
 “ and senate of Rome, he charges them with
 “ paying divine honours to the heretic and
 “ impostor, Simon of Samaria, commonly
 “ called the Magician; and for the truth of
 “ this charge, appeals to a statue then sub-
 “ sisting in Rome, and publicly dedicated to
 “ that Simon in the island of the Tiber,
 “ with this inscription, SIMONI DEO SANCTO.†
 “ But it is manifest beyond all reasonable
 “ doubt, as some learned men have shown,
 “ that Justin was led here into a gross blun-
 “ der, by his usual want of judgment and

* Middleton, ub. sup. p. 40, 41.

† See Just. Martyr. Apol. I. p. 39. edit. Thirlby. Apud Oper. p. 69. edit. Par. 1615. to which reference of Dr. Middleton's add *Oper.* p. 91 and 349, where Justin repeats the same story.

“ Justin,” says Middleton, “ was followed in the
 “ belief and assertion of this fact by all the succeeding
 “ fathers, Irenæus, Tertullian, Augustinus, Epiphanius,
 “ Eusebius.”

“ knowledge

“ knowledge of Roman affairs, and his pre-
 “ conceived belief of certain fabulous stories,
 “ which passed current about this Simon
 “ among the first christians: * for the statue
 “ and inscription, to which he appeals, were
 “ not dedicated to his countryman, Simon
 “ Magus, of whose deification there is not the
 “ least hint in any Roman writer, but to a
 “ Sabine deity, of ancient worship in Rome,
 “ and of similar name, SEMONI SANCO, † fre-
 “ quently mentioned by the old writers; as
 “ the inscription itself, dug up, about two
 “ centuries ago, from the ruins of that very

* Vid. Aut. Van Dale de Statua Simoni Mago erecta.
 Dissert. Middlet.

† Sancus, as Dionysius writes, was a deity of the old
 Sabines, whom some called Δία πατριον (vid. Dionys.
 Hal. Antiq. lib. II. cap. xlix. lib. IV. cap. lviii.) and
 the Romans Deum Fidium. And Semones signified the
 same as *Huistoi*, demigods, or heroes deified. Livy
 mentions a chapel of Semo Sancus in Rome—to whom
 the goods of certain enemies were consecrated.—*Bona*
Semoni Sanco censuerunt consecranda: quodque æris ex eis
reductum est, ex eo ænei orbes facti; positi in Sacello Sancti,
versus Ædem Quirini. Liv. lib. VIII. cap. xx.

“ place,

“place, or little island, which Justin de-
 “scribes, has clearly demonstrated.”*

The observation of Dr. Jortin on this
 circumstance is too remarkable to be passed
 over.

“I shall not,” says he, “undertake the
 “vindication of Justin concerning the cele-
 “brated statue erected to Simon Magus: I
 “am inclined to think that he was *mistaken*,
 “and that the proud Romans would never
 “have deified a Samaritan knave, and a
 “strolling magician. It seems more pro-
 “bable that they would have sent him to the
 “house of correction, or have bestowed
 “transportation upon him, or a *stone doublet*
 “sooner than a *statue*. Dr. Thirlby, who
 “pleads Justin’s cause, concludes thus: *si*
 “*quis autem quærat quid de hac re ipse sentiam,*
 “*patroni me potius quam judicis partes egisse,*
 “*negare non possum; quæque dixi, non tam*

* SEMONI SANCO DEO FIDIO SACRUM, &c.

Gruter. vol. I. p. xcvi. 5. where there are several
 more inscriptions to the same deity. Both these notes are
 from Middleton.

“*veritatis*

“ *veritatis gratia, quam Iustini dixisse, cujus*
 “ *mibi cum editione defensio ex veteri more neces-*
 “ *sario suscipienda erat, &c.* It is easy enough
 “ TO KNOW WHAT THIS MEANS, though some
 “ persons have made a shift to misunderstand
 “ it.” *

* Jortin's Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. II. p. 159, 160.
 The words of Dr. Thirlby may be thus rendered ;

“ If any one should inquire what are *my private senti-*
 “ *ments* on this subject, I cannot help acknowledging
 “ that I have acted the part of a *patron* rather than that
 “ of a *judge* ; and that, what I have said, has been *not*
 “ *so much for the sake of truth*, as for the sake of Justin,
 “ whose defence I was obliged to undertake, *according to*
 “ *the old custom of editors.*”

Dr. Jortin (p. 160—163) apologizes for Justin, by producing instances of men as worthless as Simon who had been deified about the time when Justin wrote, or not long after ; such as Alexander, Peregrinus, Neryllinus, and Epiphanes. But this is, at the best, a lame defence ; as Dr. Jortin himself seems to be convinced ; else he would not have said, “ *If any one thinks* these
 “ examples tend to support Justin, they are at his service. Dr. Thirlby, when I once mentioned them to
 “ him, thought them observable, and fit to be produced
 “ on this subject.” If Dr. Jortin could have spoken with confidence, his language would not have been quite so cold.

After

After the production of these instances, you will not, I am persuaded, lay much stress on the argument which you draw from the candour and honesty of Justin, that the appeal which he makes to the Roman registers, concerning the census, supposed to be taken at the birth of Christ, was the consequence of his having *examined* these registers, and actually found them to bear testimony to what he asserts.*

Indeed, is not the presumption on the opposite side; and does it not appear highly probable, that one who was guilty of such obvious mistakes, and betrayed such an excess of credulity in the most important cases, should also in the present, refer to spurious records, or take for granted imaginary accounts? Whether therefore the forgery which bears the title of the acts of Pilate, or an erroneous register of the census in question might be handed about among the christians, at the period when Justin wrote, makes little difference; his credulity being such as ren-

* Nisb. on the Mir. Conc. p. 72—75.

dered

dered him capable of admitting any thing, be it ever so absurd, provided it had a tendency to support what he imagined to be the cause of the gospel.

But we shall have no occasion for presumptive arguments, when facts themselves speak so plainly.

Justin says, "Bethlehem—is a certain village in the district of Judea,—in which Jesus Christ was born; *as you may learn from the registers, (or census) which were made in the time of Cyrenius (or Quirinus) who was your first procurator in Judea.*" *

This he declares in an apology addressed to the emperor, Antoninus Pius, and to the Roman senate.

On this passage Le Clerc makes the following remark.

* Βηθλεεμ—κωμη τις εστιν εν τη χωρα Ιουδαιων,—εν η εγεννηθη Ιησους, ως και μαρτυρει δυνασθε εκ των απογραφων των γενομενων εκι Κυρηνις τε υμεισιν εν Ιουδαεια πρωτη γενομενη επιτροπη. Justin. Oper. p. 75. Cyrenius is also mentioned, p. 83 and 303, in connexion with the same event.

T

" Justin

“ Justin confidently affirms that the Ro-
 “ mans might know from the census made
 “ under Cyrenius (that is P. Sulp. Quirinus)
 “ *who was the first Roman procurator (emilpon®)*
 “ *in Judea*, in what place Christ was born.
 “ It is certain that a census of Judea was
 “ taken under Quirinus: but *this was ten*
 “ *years after the birth of Christ*, and when
 “ Judea was reduced to a Roman province,
 “ as may be learned from Josephus.” *

“ But (proceeds Le Clerc) at that time
 “ Quirinus was governor of Syria, and
 “ Coponius procurator of Judea, and con-
 “ sequently under the direction of Quirinus.
 “ During the life and reign of king Herod,
 “ there was no procurator of Judea, in the
 “ name of the Romans. But the time of
 “ this census under Quirinus, is marked out
 “ wrong by Justin, from misunderstanding

* Clerici Hist. Eccles. p. 622. Le Clerc here refers
 to Joseph. Ant. lib. XVII. cap. xv. § 5. lib. XVIII.
 cap. i. § 1. To which may be added, De Bell. Jud.
 lib. VII. cap. viii. § 1.

“ the

“ the passage in Luke (chap. ii. ver. 2.)
“ where the mention of it occurs.”*

Josephus's

* To this Le Clerc adds, “ I know that there are
“ some very learned men who would not translate *pro-*
“ *curator* by ἐπιτρον; which is the word here used by
“ Justin; because in reality there was not a *procurator* of
“ Judea. But though there was not, Justin thought there
“ was, from his calling Quirinus πρῶτον ἐπιτρον: for
“ the extraordinary power which was vested in the cen-
“ sor of Judea, as it had no predecessor in Herod, so
“ also it had no successor. The first Roman ἐπιτρον
“ was Coponius, who presided over Judea when it was
“ made a province. Such mistakes, though they do
“ not affect the main argument, yet, if noticed by hea-
“ thens, might hurt the cause of christianity; for some-
“ times, on account of the most trifling errors, men
“ of bad dispositions cast contempt on the whole argu-
“ ment, though in other respects the most deserving of
“ regard. No harm, however, can result, if we con-
“ tent ourselves with excusing, but do not seek to re-
“ commend such errors.”

In p. 225, Le Clerc mentions the same event; and,
in order to reconcile the passage in Luke with historical
fact, translates the verse thus, *This census was made BE-*
FORE Quirinus was governor of Syria, using πρῶτον for
πρὸ τῆς, as in John i. 15, 20. πρὶν μὲν νῦν.

T 2

But,

Josephus's account in his Antiquities is as follows :

“ The country over which Archelaus had
“ reigned, being made tributary, and joined
“ to

But, as Dr. Campbell justly observes, “ not only the
“ examples which are brought to support this interpreta-
“ tion are inapplicable to the purpose, as having *πρὸ*
“ immediately prefixed to the case it governs, which it
“ is not in the present instance ; but that, it may justly be
“ affirmed, that *no person ever did or could imagine the*
“ *interpretation devised, who had not previously heard of an*
“ *inconsistency which the obvious interpretation bore to the*
“ *report of the Jewish historian, and who was not in quest*
“ *of something, in the way of explanation, which might*
“ *reconcile them.*” (Campb. on the Gospels, vol. II.
p. 521.) Indeed is the passage Greek, according to this
interpretation ?

That *ἡγεμονεύοντες τῆς Συρίας Κυρηνίαι* is to be taken
absolutely, is evident also from a similar phrase in the
beginning of the following chapter ; *ἡγεμονεύοντες Ποντίας*
Πιλαίας τῆς Ἰσδαίας, &c. where the same mode of expres-
sion, and the same construction are both used. So also
Acts xviii. 12. *Γαλλίωνος ἀνθυπατεύοντες τῆς Ἀχαιίας*, is
another construction of the same kind. Indeed common
sense without criticism would lead to this construction.

So

“ to that of Syria, Cæsar sends thither Cyrenius, a man of consular dignity, *to assess* the property in Syria, and dispose of the house of Archelaus.” lib. XVII. cap. xv. § 5.

“ Cyrenius, therefore,—came with a small number of men into Syria, being sent by Cæsar, to be judge of the nation, and *assessor* of the property contained in it. “ With

So that there is not the least reason for Le Clerc’s supposition. (See also Campbell, p. 522.)

Some imagine the words *αὐτὴ ἡ ἀπογραφὴ*, &c. to be an interpolation : but this, as being a mere conjecture to support a hypothesis, is hardly deserving of attention.

In order therefore to render Luke consistent with Josephus, Dr. Campbell supposes *γενέσθαι* to signify *took effect*; but this is a forced, and, I may venture to say, an ill supported interpretation. The passages adduced are Matt. v. 18. *ἕως ἀν πάντα γενῆται*. vi. 10. *γενήσῃ τὸ θελημα σου* (so xxvi. 42. and Luke xi. 2.) Luke xxi. 42. *μή τὸ θελημα μου, ἀλλὰ τὸ σου γενέσθω*. Matt. xviii. 19. *γενήσῃ αὐτοῖς*. Cor. i. 54. *τοῖς γενήσῃ λογὸς ὁ γεγραμμένος*. But in all these the meaning of the word is *to happen, to be, or to come to pass*; which, though it may be explained in some cases by the phrase *taking effect*,

“ With him is sent Coponius, of Equestrian
 “ rank, to govern Judea with absolute au-
 “ thority. Cyrenius then came into Judea,
 “ which was now become an appendage to
 “ Syria, in order *to assess* the property of the
 “ country, and to sell the effects of Arche-
 “ laus. And the Jews, though, at first,
 “ they could hardly bear the name of the
 “ *enrollment*, yet submitted, &c. — But Judas
 “ Gaulonites and the Sadducees opposed it,

effect, yet it does not follow that this is the expression by which it ought to be grammatically interpreted. The whole *system of ideas which a word contains in the connexion in which it is placed, and the simple naked meaning of that word considered singly and in itself*, are two very different things. In the passages here quoted by Dr. Campbell, ambiguity is prevented by the nature of the subject and the connexion. In the passage ascribed to St. Luke, neither one nor the other is the case. The maxim therefore on which sound criticism would proceed, in such a case, is to take the natural meaning of the word, preferably to one so far fetched, and difficult to be ascertained. Is not Dr. Campbell's own remark verified here against him? *It may be justly affirmed, that no person could imagine the interpretation devised, who was not in QUEST of explanations to reconcile inconsistencies?*

“ calling

“ calling the *assessment* little better than down-

“ right slavery, &c. lib. XVIII. cap. i. § 1.

“ Cyrenius, having now disposed of Arche-

“ laus’s effects, and the *assessments* being

“ come to a period, which took place in the

“ thirty-seventh year after the defeat of Antony,

“ by Cæsar, at Actium, &c.” (lib. XVIII.

cap. ii. § 1.) Cyrenius is also called *assessor*

(τιμωτής) of Judea (lib. XX. cap. iv. § 2.

And, to add no more, in his Jewish war,

speaking of Eleazar, who held out against

Flavius Silva, he says, in express terms, that

“ this Eleazar was a descendant of Judas,”

(Gaulonites) “ who had persuaded several

“ of the Jews, as we have before mentioned,

“ to refuse submission to the *assessment* or

“ enrollment, when Cyrenius was sent as

“ *assessor* into Judea. (Μη ποιεῖσθαι τὰς ΑΠΟ-

“ ΓΡΑΦΑΣ, ὅτι Κυρηνιῶν ΤΙΜΗΤΗΣ Εἰς τὴν Ἰουδαίαν

“ ἐπεμψθη).” De Bell. Jud. lib. VII. cap.

viii. § 1.

It is worthy of observation, that in the

first and second of these passages, the

word for *to assess* is ἀπολιμνισμένον; in the se-

cond, and last, *assessor* is expressed by *τιμήτης*, and *enrollment* is *απογραφαι*, and in the second, *assessment* is *αποτιμησιν*. In the third, *assessments* is *αποτιμησεων*, and in the last, the word used is *απογραφας*.

They have all plainly a reference to one and the same event. Can any doubt, then, be entertained, that they all convey the same general meaning, but are used only to prevent a recurrence of the same terms? Particularly, in the second passage, where it is said, *Οι δε (the Jews) καιπερ το κατ' αρχας εν δεινῳ φερόντες την επι ταις απογραφαις ακροασιν, υποκαλεβησαν—* *δε.* *οι μεν απετιμων χρηματα, —* *Ισδας δε, δε.* *—* *πατερινην επι απογραφαις, την τε αποτιμησιν υδεν αλλο η ανηλικους δουλειαν επιφερειν λεγοντες, δε.*—can any thing be plainer, than that *απογραφαις* and *αποτιμησιν*, as they have the article prefixed, and are connected with *απειμων*, have all a reference to one and the same event? or, in the last instance, where Judas Gaulonites is represented as advising the people *μη ποιεισθαι τας απογραφας* in the case in which Cyrenius was the *τιμήτης*, is it possible that two distant times or events should be

be meant? If there be any difference between the two words *απογραφη* and *αποδυναμις*, it seems that the former signifies the giving in a person's name as a subject of taxation, and the latter the taxation itself which follows.

These passages therefore plainly determine the time of this census. For the battle of Actium happened (according to Le Clerc) thirty-one years before the vulgar *Æra*, or twenty-seven years before the birth of Christ; of consequence, the census here referred to, must have taken place *ten years after Christ was born*. In this view therefore, Justin's reference is manifestly erroneous.*

Dr. Pearce, indeed, the late Bishop of Rochester, whose name will be ever sacred

* According to Dr. Sharp's Chronology, Christ must at this time, have been about seven or eight years old. But this makes little difference; for the time of the census being after the deposition of Archelaus, when Christ had been born for some time; and the census mentioned by St. Luke and referred to by Justin, having taken place *before* the birth of Christ; the inconsistency is the same, whether Christ be supposed to be one, two, or any number of years old, at that period.

among

among the friends of liberality and learning, adopting the interpretation of *αρσιν*, given by Le Clerc, is of opinion, that Augustus, in consequence of Herod's misconduct, "intended to tax Herod's kingdom, and make it tributary; but that his good nature suffered him to go no farther than an enrollment; Herod having, after two embassies sent to Augustus without effect, found out a method of pacifying him by a third."—That this is the enrollment referred to by St. Luke.—"And that Josephus has actually taken notice of it; though by the bye only." *

As

* Pearce's Commentary, vol. I. p. 307, 308. "Who had the care of the enrollment, it is no where said, though it is likely, that it was Sentius Saturninus (or somebody deputed by him, who, according to Josephus, was then governor of Syria. Ant. lib. XVII. chap. i. § 1." p. 308. Tertullian says the same, (Adv. Marcion. lib. IV. chap. xix. p. 433. edit. Rigalt.) "*Sed et census constat actus sub Augusto in Judæa per Sentium Saturninum, apud quos genus ejus (Christi) inquirere potuissent.*" But it does not appear from

As this conjecture is to be supported by the evidence of Josephus, let us see on what Dr. Pearce regards it as founded.

“ Josephus,” says he, “ after he had said
 “ that Cyrenius came into Judea ἀπολιμνομεν-
 “ αὐλων τὰς ὑσας, *to tax their substance*, adds,
 “ οἷος καὶ περ το κατ’ αρχας ἐν δεινῳ φεροντες τὴν ἐπὶ ταῖς
 “ ἀπογραφαῖς ἀκροαυ, ὑποκαλεβησαν τε εἰς πλεον ἐναντισθαι,
 “ &c. *i. e. The Jews, though in the begin-*
 “ *ning they were much disturbed at the report*
 “ *(viz. that they were to be taxed) when the*
 “ *enrollments were made, yet they forbore for a*
 “ *while to oppose it (i. e. the tax when laid)*
 “ *any farther, by the persuasion of Joazar the*
 “ *high priest, &c.* In five different places
 “ where he speaks of what Cyrenius then did,
 “ he uses the word ἀπολιμνοσις, or ἀπολιμαν, or ἀπο-
 “ λιμασθαι; but never ἀπογραφη or ἀπογραφαι, except
 “ in this place, and in Bell. Jud. vii. 8. 1.

from Josephus that there was any census taken at that time. This therefore is a mere gratis assumption to reconcile the account of the supposititious Luke with history. Though even in this case, the difficulty as to Cyrenius would still remain.

“ where

" where I suppose it to be the enrollment
 " made ten years before, for this very reason ;
 " and because the *απογραφη* mentioned by
 " Luke must have been a distinct thing from
 " what Cyrenius undertook upon Archelaus's
 " being deposed. Thus, I think, with the
 " help of the former note this great difficulty
 " among the learned about reconciling Luke
 " and Josephus is sufficiently removed."*

But these observations will, I think, be completely obviated, if it be considered,

I. That Josephus would never content himself with merely an obscure reference to so important an event as that of a census, on which another still more important depended, but would certainly have given an accurate account of it. Now it is not even pretended that any such account is to be found in his whole history. The only one, which bears any resemblance to it, is the relation which is given of the *cens* which the Jewish nation

* Pearce, *ibid.* p. 308.

*took to Cæsar and Herod.** But this is a very different thing from a census, and can have no connexion with ἀπογραφὴ or ἀπογραφή. Besides, it does not appear from the passage that it was an oath taken at the time when the events, recorded in this chapter, happened; but is introduced as an incidental remark, in order to illustrate a circumstance in Herod's conduct to the Pharisees, and if not referable to the oath of allegiance at the beginning of his reign, may perhaps relate to the circumstances of Herod's return to Jeru-

* Antiquit. lib. XVII. chap. ii. § 6. p. 753. ed. Hudson. In which passage the historian mentions "the Pharisees as having refused to take the oath of allegiance " to Cæsar and Herod, *when the rest of the Jews consented* " to it; that having been fined on this account, and the " fine having been paid by the wife of Pheroras, they " had predicted the abolition of Nero's government, and " the succession of Pheroras's family. Which being told " Herod, he put to death the most criminal of the Phari- " fees," &c. By which passage it plainly appears that the oath here referred to, was prior to the time of the connexion between Antipater and Pheroras, which is the principal subject of this section.

salem,

saalem, after visiting Agrippa, by whom, the Jews were confirmed in their customs and privileges, at the suggestion of Herod: the news of which being communicated to them, in an assembly, called by him on purpose; they returned home with great joy, *praying many blessings to the king.** Or, *which seems the most probable*, it points at an event related in the fifteenth book,† in which it is said, that Herod, in consequence of his tyrannies and suspicious temper, appointed spies to watch the conduct of his subjects, and that he himself frequently went in disguise among them, in order to know their sentiments and designs; and that he severely punished the most refractory; “the rest he thought to
 “bring by oaths to fidelity; and compelled
 “them bound by such oaths to promise that they
 “would preserve their allegiance to his govern-

* Antiq. lib. XVI. cap. ii. § 5. Οἱ δὲ (Ἰουδαῖοι) τῇ χαρίϊ καὶ τῷ λόγῳ δεδημαγωγημένοι, μετὰ πλείστης ἀπῆσαν χάρις, πολλὰ ἀγαθὰ συνευχόμενοι τῷ βασιλεῖ.

† lib. XV. cap. x. § 4. p. 698, 699.

“ ment.

“*ment.* Most, through respect and fear,
 “yielded to his demands.—He wished also
 “to persuade *Pollio the Pharisee*, Sameas,
 “and most of their party to *swear allegiance*;
 “but *they neither complied, nor were punished*
 “in the same manner as others who had
 “refused, on account of the respect in which
 “*Pollio was* held.” With this passage it
 seems to have a close connexion.

Indeed to whichever of these events it refers, nay, even if it refers to neither of them, makes little or no difference: since it is plain, that at any rate, it cannot, without the greatest force, have the least relation to a census.*

II. It is a mere conjecture, assumed to account for a difficulty.

III. The sense of the passage is not such as Bishop Pearce gives. *Επι ταῖς ἀπογραφαῖς* does not signify, *when the enrollments were*

* Dr. Lardner indeed thought otherwise. See Credibility, ap. works, vol. I. p. 278. &c. And in reply, Priestl. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 127, 128. which is the same as Theol. Repos. vol. V. p. 93.

made;

made; but concerning the enrollments.*

That *ἐν* has this meaning, will be evident to any one who will take the trouble to examine either Stock† or Vigerus.‡

And IV. That, on a comparison of the passages above quoted, they all throw light upon each other, if they be supposed to refer to one and the same event; but are full of obscurity, on any other supposition.

Thus, therefore, I think, it is evident, that historical fact is inconsistent both with the reference made by Justin Martyr, and the passage quoted as St. Luke's. ||

If

* *Τὴν ἐν ταῖς ἀπογραφαῖς ἀνροσιν* is rendered by Hudson, *vel nomen descriptionis*: wrong, as I should judge; but if right, it will not benefit Dr. Pearce's argument, who takes the words in a very different sense.

† Interp. Græc. N. T. p. 243.

‡ De Idiotism. Græc. p. 560, 561.

|| I cannot help regarding the following observations, as judicious;

“ That there were rolls of the number of citizens or
“ freemen in each province, laid up for some time in the
“ capitol, or such like place, is very probable. But
“ there

If this latter however be an interpolation, the weight of these remarks will lie upon Justin alone. At the same time thus much will

“ there is no account of any christian that ever saw them ;
 “ nor likelihood that they might have had the sight and
 “ searching of them, to find the name of any particular
 “ person, if they had desired it.” — “ If any christian
 “ had ever seen them, and had seen our Lord’s name,
 “ *Jesus*, registered, as the son of Joseph and Mary,
 “ born in such a year of Augustus, and had declared to
 “ his fellow-christians such his account ; this had at once
 “ ended all disputes and mistakes ; and all christians after
 “ that would have agreed in one account. Whereas we
 “ see, on the contrary, that those few of the ancients
 “ that about one hundred and fifty or two hundred years
 “ after the time have said any thing about it, have dis-
 “ ferred very much.”

“ Justin ” — “ supposed or guessed that there were then
 “ remaining in the emperor’s custody such rolls, which
 “ they might, if they pleased, search ; but it does not
 “ follow, that any one that would, might search them ;
 “ much less that any had searched them upon this ac-
 “ count. And the saying of Tertullian imports no more.
 “ He speaks of them as of rolls, which one might sup-
 “ pose to be kept in the Roman archives ; not as though
 “ he had seen them, or had any account of any one that
 U “ had,

will be certain, that the interpolation must have been a very early one; and will naturally lead to this conclusion, that there may

“ had; much less as though he knew what they contained
 “ concerning Christ’s birth, or the time of it. And,
 “ indeed, if there were then any in being, and Justin
 “ and he had been permitted to search them; one of these
 “ two would have searched in the time of Quirinius, and
 “ the other in the rolls of Saturninus.”

“ ’Tis probable enough that both of them were mis-
 “ taken in their guessing that the names of particular
 “ persons were set down in them. Suppose the names
 “ of every one, and the parents of every child, were set
 “ down in the first copies drawn up in the several pro-
 “ vinces; yet it is likely that in those copies sent to
 “ Rome, and laid up there, there was recorded only the
 “ number of persons in each city, tribe, &c. and the
 “ value of the estates. Else, the account of all the pro-
 “ vinces and kingdoms of that empire, would have filled
 “ books too many for one house to hold. In short, these
 “ rolls, if they had been searched, might have given
 “ some light; but since no body did search them, neither
 “ did Irenæus (*concerning whose evidence the author is here*
 “ *speaking*) know, nor do we know, what was in them.”

Wall’s Defence of the History of Infant Baptism, p. 309

—311.

possibly

possibly be even now in the books of scripture, some passages which did not come from the hands of the original writers.

This will be sufficient to make the subject of my next, and last letter.

I am, SIR,

Your friend and servant,

J. POPE.

U 2 LETTER

LETTER VII.

ON INTERPOLATIONS IN THE PRESENT COPIES OF
THE NEW TESTAMENT.

SIR,

IT would, I acknowledge, be a strong presumption in favour of the authenticity of the passages which have given occasion to the present controversy, if these were the only ones on which suspicion had fallen. But there are many more, which, by an accurate comparison of Mss. have been found to be spurious, and some others, perhaps, which, though we have the concurrent suffrage of all the copies, may not unjustly be reckoned as of the same character.

Of the latter sort give me leave to mention one which has a reference to the very event spoken of in the preceding letter; and
indeed

indeed affords an additional confirmation that the taxing alluded to, was the same as that which Josephus mentions.

It is in the latter part of Gamaliel's speech, in Acts v. 36, 37. in which he is made to speak of an event, the insurrection of Theudas, *which did not occur till several years after Gamaliel was dead*; and to represent it as prior to that of Judas, which took place above twenty years before Gamaliel could have made this speech.* The words which I regard as interpolated, may be easily collected from their being inclosed in brackets in the following verses.

“ For, before those days rose up [*Theudas boasting himself to be somebody; to whom*
 “ *a number of men, about four hundred, joined*
 “ *themselves: who was slain; and all, as many*

* See Joseph. Art. Jud. lib. XVIII. cap. i. § 1, 6. lib. xx. cap. iv. § 1, 2. De Bell. Jud. lib. II. cap. viii. § 1. Beza and Bishop Pearce labour hard to reconcile Josephus and this passage; but very little to the satisfaction of an intelligent reader; as may be seen by consulting them on this place.

“ *as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought*
 “ *to nought. After this man, rose up]* Judas
 “ of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and
 “ drew away much people after him,* *he*
 “ *also perished, and all, even as many as*
 “ *obeyed him were dispersed.*”

By rejecting the clause thus inclosed, the whole passage will be just, and agreeable both to the history of the times, and the character of Gamaliel.

Of much the same kind is one which has crept into the last declaration of Christ against the Jews, in which he appears to speak of them, as having been the murderers of a person, who did not die before the siege of Jerusalem. The passage is in Matt. xxiii. 35. and Luke xi. 51. In the former of which places, the following words appear to me to be interpolated,

* *ναυεν*, in the original; which ought to be translated, *both he perished, and all, even as many as obeyed him, &c.* by which means the whole verse will preserve a consistency.

From

From the blood of righteous Abel, to the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

And in the latter ;

From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple.

It is certain, that no probable method has been found out to clear St. Matthew and St. Luke, if these passages came from them, from the charge of a most palpable anachronism, in this place. For, not only is the supposition, that the person meant here is Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, a merely unsupported conjecture ; but it is highly improbable, that one so much respected, should fall a sacrifice to the fury of the people. And as to another Zacharias, the son of Jehoiada, (2 Chron. xxiv. 40.) *who was stoned to death in the court of the house of the Lord, (ver. 21, 22.) by order of king Joash ;* the event seems too remote from the time of Christ, for him to adduce it, in the manner in which he does this.

Nor is it likely that he would mention the blood of Abel, as coming upon the *Jews*, when they could neither be guilty of it, nor even accessory to it; the crime having been committed many ages before a Jew existed.

Josephus gives an account of a fact so nearly resembling this, that I acknowledge myself much inclined to suppose, that some early transcriber of the gospels first inserted it from him, in the margin; and that, in a short course of time, there not being many copies then existing to enable a common reader to detect the error, it found its way into the text. The words of Josephus are remarkable indeed.

Speaking of the violence which the Zelotæ had committed, he proceeds thus; * “ They
“ therefore—† being determined to kill Za-
“ charias the son of Baruchus—call toge-
“ ther seventy of the common people who

* De Bell. Jud. lib. IV. cap. v. § 4.

† I read *ὑποβιβαστοι* with Bigotius, instead of *ὑποβι-
βαστοι* in the text.

“ were

“ were indeed invested with the magistracy,
 “ but had no real power, and lay an accu-
 “ sation against him—of a design to betray
 “ the city to Vespasian. An accusation
 “ which was totally unfounded.—But the
 “ seventy acquitted him.—On which the
 “ Zelotæ raised a clamour,—and two of the
 “ most daring fell upon Zacharias, and *mur-*
 “ *dered him in the middle of the temple.*”

I cannot help being of opinion, that this
 is the very event to which the passages quo-
 ted, relate : and of consequence, that the
 conclusion to which we are led, is, that they
 are both spurious, and inserted, perhaps,
 in the manner above-mentioned, after the
 time when Jerusalem was taken.

In the first chapter of the Acts also, there
 appears to be a most manifest interpolation,
 in that part of St. Peter's speech which re-
 lates to Judas's death. This is so inconsis-
 tent with the account which St. Matthew
 gives ch. xxvii. 5. that no art of criticism can
 reconcile them. I have myself examined all
 the authorities which have been produced
 by

by Grotius, Pricæus, and Mr. Wakefield from the classical and other writers, in favour of that sense of *απρηξало* in St. Matthew,* which may establish the semblance of an agreement between the two writers, and can, from my own knowledge declare, that there is no foundation for any other, than the common interpretation. Mr. Wakefield indeed, in a letter with which he favoured me, in reply to some remarks which I sent him on this subject, acknowledges himself “ inclined “ to abandon *every instance from classical au-*

† See Wakefield’s *Silva Critica*, sect. 84. And his notes on Matt. xxvii. 5. The sense which he puts upon *απρηξало* is, he *was choaked with grief*. And the disorder of which Judas died in consequence of this grief, he represents to be a *violent dysentery*. Dr. Scott on (Matt. xxvii. 5.) adopts the common interpretation, and supports it by unanswerable authorities. See also Whitby. The sentiments of *Pricæus* may be seen in Suicer’s *Thesaurus* (vol. I. p. 407, 408. sub voc. *απρηξало*.) who has also given a fair exhibition of the different opinions of critics and divines on this subject. This work of Suicer’s deserves to be better known than it is at present; for it is full of most learned information.

“ *thority* ;”

"*thority*;" and adheres to his interpretation, on the principle of *considering Matthew as a Jew, and the important solution which would result from it.* Which indeed is taking the whole point for granted, that the two histories are reconcileable; and not explaining a historical fact, by the plain meaning of the words in which it is related, but assuming the fact, and making this the meaning of the passage, contrary to every instance and authority which may be produced.

I would therefore regard, as an interpolation, the following verses;

Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity; and, falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out. And it was known unto all the dwellers at Jerusalem; insomuch as that field is called in their proper tongue, Aceldama, that is to say, the field of blood. Acts i. 18, 19.

The verses, of consequence should be thus connected; (v. 16, 17, 20.)

Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the holy ghost by the mouth

*mouth of David spake before, concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. (For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.) For it is written in the book of Psalms, let his habitation, &c. In the application of which prophecy, St. Peter refers, not to the manner of Judas's death, but to the vacancy which it necessarily occasioned in the apostolic office.**

These, however, you will tell me, are my own conjectures only; and may, perhaps, call upon me to produce instances of interpolations still continued, in the common text of the New Testament, and against the authenticity of which sufficient evidence may

* It is with sincere satisfaction, that I find myself supported in this remark by so worthy and able a divine as bishop Pearce; who on the eighteenth verse says expressly; "these seem not to be the words of Peter, "and perhaps they were not the words of Luke the writer of "the Acts of the Apostles."

I cannot help thinking that this remark though referred to the eighteenth verse only, was intended to reach also to the nineteenth; because they are both connected together, and if the eighteenth be suspicious, the nineteenth is still more so.

be

be produced. Of these therefore, you may take the following as a specimen.

Matt. vi. 13. *For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever; Amen.*

This text, though continued in our common editions of the New Testament, is not to be found in the Cambridge MS. (which I cannot help regarding as of equal antiquity with the Alexandrian, and considered as being much interpolated, of *greater authority* in those places where important *omissions* occur) nor, according to Dr. Mill, in the Vatican; besides Reuchlin's, and eight others.

This is, indeed, a small number, compared with all the extant Mss. of the gospels; yet, added to the circumstance, that this text is found in none of the earlier Greek or Latin fathers; nor in the Latin, Arabic, or Saxon versions; nor even in the gospel of St. Luke, in which the same prayer occurs; it affords a sufficient argument of spuriousness.*

* The Alexandrian, Ephrem, Boreel and Cotton Mss. are defective in this part of scripture.

So,

So, Matt. xxiii. 14. *Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees; hypocrites; for ye devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.*

This verse is not found in the Cambridge MS. Stephens's Eighth, Reuchlin's, or two others. It is wanting in most of the good Latin copies, as also in the Saxon and Arabic, according to Mill and Bengelius; and it is placed before v. 13. by five very old Mss. the Syriac, three Arabic, the Coptic and Ethiopic versions. It is therefore rejected from the text by Dr. Griesbach, the latest and most accurate collator of the New Testament Mss.

Matt. xxv. 13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, [*in which the son of man cometh.*]

The words inclosed in brackets are wanting in all the best and most ancient Mss. Accordingly, they are rejected from the text by Griesbach.

Matt.

Matt. xxvii. 35. *That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet, they parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.* This is wanting almost universally in the most approved and ancient Mss. as well as the best versions. Griesbach has therefore thrown this out of the text.

Luke ix. 55, 56. But he turned, and rebuked them, [*and said, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.*] and they went to another village.

The passage included in brackets is wanting in six of the oldest Mss. extant; besides twenty-five others; (several of which are of great antiquity) the Saxon, and the Ethiopic versions, several of the ancient Latin copies; and some of the fathers. Wettstein, who believes it genuine, says, that* “it was erased by the orthodox, to prevent the Marcionites from taking advantage of it.” Beza

* Orthodoxi hæc videntur delevisse, ne Marcionitæ haberent quo se tuerentur. Wettstein in loc.

found in wanting in five ancient *Mss.** And *Stapulensis* (says Bengelius, †) affirms that it occurs neither in the ancient Latin, nor in the Greek *MS.* copies. This indeed is exaggerated; for there are some *Mss.* which contain it. These are however few and of little authority against such a concurrence as is here exhibited. In consequence of this, Griesbach has rejected it; and I fear, notwithstanding the fine sentiment which it contains, its authenticity can hardly be supported.

There is great reason to suspect also Luke *xxii.* 43, 44. ‡ to be inauthentic. At least it is not found in the Alexandrian *MS.* nor in

* Vide Bez. in loc.

† Bengel. in loc. Matthæi (in loc.) regards it as authentic; though he acknowledges it to be wanting in nine of his *Mss.* He had thirty-one Greek *MS.* copies of St. Luke.

‡ And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was, as it were great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.

twelve

twelve

twelve others; ten of which being lectionaries, it can scarcely be supposed that they would be without this remarkable part of scripture. Besides which, it is marked as suspicious, in the Basil MS. which is about a thousand years old, and in two others. Epiphanius speaks of it as wanting in several Mss. in his time; as do Jerom and Hilary of several both Latin and Greek in theirs; the same testimony is given by Photius, Anastasius, Isaac Catholicus, and Nikon, who charge the Armenians with having erased it.* This, however, is a ridiculous accusation; and can scarcely be proved on any sect of heretics. If these verses be spurious, a great difficulty will be removed, which has hung like a dead weight on this part of the evangelical history.

In John v. 3, 4. if we may credit several good Mss. and versions, there is a considerable interpolation, the following words being inauthentic: *waiting for the moving of the*

* Vide Wettstein in loc.

water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water, whosoever then first after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

Hence therefore I conclude, that of the subsequent verses, those words also are spurious, which are included in brackets.

When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, [*wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but, while I am coming, another steppeth down before me. Jesus saith unto him*] rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

So John vi. 4. (*And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh*) which is referred to by Dr. Priestley,* as being interpolated in the word *πασχα* (*passover*) and the whole of which (he says) is regarded by Bishop Pearce as spurious; is demonstrated by the latter to be

* Theol. Rep. vol. IV. p. 287. Hist. of Earl. Op. vol. IV. p. 105.

so by such reasons as may afford a good method of determining the authenticity of several other passages both in sacred and profane writers.

“ There does not (says he*) seem to be
 “ any reason for the evangelist’s inserting this
 “ verse, *nothing in this chapter having any*
 “ *relation to the feast of the passover, or to any*
 “ *other of the Jewish feasts.* G. J. Vossius,
 “ and Mr. Mann (De Anno emortuali
 “ Christi, p. 173.) are of opinion, that the
 “ word *παροχα* is an interpolation; and I
 “ think that the whole verse is so; *because in*
 “ *chap. v. 1. mention is made of a FEAST*
 “ *(probably the feast of Pentecost) and in chap.*
 “ *vii. 2. of the feast of tabernacles, between*
 “ *which two, no feast appointed by the law of*
 “ *Moses intervened. It does not appear, from*
 “ *the evangelist’s account, that Jesus was pre-*
 “ *sent at a feast of the passover here mentioned;*
 “ and yet it seems probable, that he, who
 “ *fulfilled all righteousness, would not have*

* Pearce’s Comment. vol. I. p. 499. note A.

*"been absent from a feast of the passover which
 " (as is here said) was then nigh at hand."*

I make no doubt therefore that this verse is an interpolation, though it is found in all the *Mss.*

Acts viii. 37. And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God.

This verse is wanting in thirty-four *Mss.* among which are the most ancient; nor does it occur either in the oldest Syriac, the Arabic published by Erpenius, the Coptic, or Ethiopic versions, or in the Latin copies prior to the Vulgate. And of fifteen Greek *Mss.* collated by Matthæi,* three only contain this verse. Griesbach has rejected it, as spurious, from the text; in which he is most certainly right.

Acts ix. 5, 6. And he said, who art thou Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest: [It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling

* In Act. p. 94, 95.

and astonished, said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him,] arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.

The clauses contained within brackets are not found either in the Alexandrian, Ephrem, or Bede's MS. (which last, as being greatly interpolated, is of the more authority in its omissions; and is besides near one thousand two hundred years old) nor in *forty-one* other Mss. quoted by Wettstein; now the whole number of Wettstein's Mss. of this part of scripture, is only sixty-two; of the remaining eighteen, the Cambridge and seven others are defective here, the Coislinian is only a fragment of Acts ix. 24. 25. and the other *nine* are either modern, or unexamined. To which may be added, that Matthæi, in his collations of this passage, says, that not one of his Mss. (and these were fourteen) contains it. It is not found in the old Syriac, Erpenius's Arabic, Coptic, nor in the Latin copies before Jerom: and in the latter Syriac it is plainly said, in the margin, that it does

not occur in the Greek copies of this part of the scripture. So that its spuriousness is sufficiently proved. To the word *arise*, should, however, be prefixed *but* (*αλλα*) which is found in all these Mss. And thus Griesbach reads.

Acts xx. 27. *Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

The word *God* is inserted here, contrary to the authority of the best and most eminent Mss. and versions, which read *the Lord*, (*κυριος*) meaning Jesus Christ. And Wetstein says expressly; * that “ the reading *θεος* (*God*) “ which is commonly received, (and which “ is indeed taken from the editions of Com- “ plutum, Erasmus, and Stephens, the sources of all the present editions) was found “ by the Complutensian editors in no Greek “ Mss. by Erasmus, in one only, by Stephens, in one only, if in any; by Bengelius in one; by himself in one; and by “ Mill, perhaps in none; but at the utmost,

* Test. Græc. vol. II. p. 596.

“ in one or two; and that not one of these
“ Mss. is either ancient, or nearly so.”

Of the ancient Mss. which contain the Acts, four read *of the Lord*, one, *of the Lord and of God*; (*κυρις και θεος*) and the other two are defective in this place.*

Ephes. iii. 9. God, who created all things *by Jesus Christ*. In this verse, the words *by Jesus Christ* are a manifest interpolation; for they are wanting in the Alexandrian, Ephrem, Clermont, Augian and Boernerian Mss. which are all of high antiquity, as well as in two others; they do not occur in the older Syriac (in the latter Syriac they are marked as suspicious) in Erpenius's Arabic,

* Dr. Williams (on Matthew ub. sup. p. 17—19.) has given very good reasons for supposing also 1 Cor. xvi. 22. to be spurious. Indeed it displays, as he says justly, “ a severity and passion in it, not entirely consistent with the benevolent spirit of the gospel. Besides, it is introduced very unnaturally. — When St. Paul, at other times, is speaking of the unbelieving Jews, who not only did not love, but greatly hated, the Lord Jesus Christ, he always expresseth the strongest affection for them.”

the Coptic, Ethiopic, or Vulgate Latin versions. Nor are they found in the ancient Italic, which is of all versions the most ancient, and of the best authority, or in the writings of Tertullian, Jerom, Ambrose, Basil, Cyrill, Theodoret, Augustine, Vigilius, or Pelagius. So that they may fairly be pronounced to be spurious.*

* I cannot help taking notice of a mistake committed by the worthy Mr. Lindsey, in reckoning the common text of the nineteenth verse of this chapter among the false readings; and the error into which he is led by having Griesbach's edition of the New Testament alone before him. The reading which Griesbach adopts is the common reading itself; nor does he make any remarks upon it, in the inner margin; which he always does, when he admits a new reading into his text. The interpretation, *the surpassing love of the knowledge of Christ*, taken from the reading *αγαπην της γνωσεως* of the Alexandrian MS. appears to me to convey no clear ideas. The common interpretation means no more than "the love of Christ which surpasseth *idea* or *conception*." St. Paul sometimes plays upon words, as he does here in *γνωαι* and *γνωσεως*. See Lindsey's second address to the Stud. of Ox. and Camb. p. 236, 237.

Coloss.

Coloss. i. 14. In whom we have redemption [*through his blood,*] even the forgiveness of sins.

The words *through his blood*, are not to be found in the Alexandrian, Ephrem, Clermont, Saint Germain, Augian, or Boernerian Mss. which are of the first authority and antiquity; they are wanting also in *thirty-one* more, referred to by Griesbach; and in *ten* by Matthæi; they do not occur in the Syriac, Erpenius's Arabic, Coptic, Ethiopic, Vulgate, or old Italic versions; nor were they known to Athanasius, Basil, Cyrill, Gregory Nyssen, Chrysostom, Theodoret, Damascenus, Theophilus, Victorinus, Augustin, Ambrose, or Bede. On this account Griesbach has expunged them from the text.

1 Timoth. iii. 16. *God was manifest in the flesh.* The word *God* has been interpolated here for *who* or *which* (ὅς or ὅ). The Alexandrian, Ephrem, Augian, Boernerian, and
one

one more, read δ ; the Clermont,* and (according to Bengelius) the Boernerian itself, had δ for its original reading: the Vatican is without this epistle, the Saint Germain has not the five first chapters, and the Coislinian has only from the seventh to the fifteenth verse. So that not one of the most ancient Mss. reads *God* ($\delta\epsilon\Theta$). All the later Mss. adopt the common reading. None of the versions, excepting the Arabic in Walton's Polyglot† read $\delta\epsilon\Theta$ (God) but all δ ; or δ (who or which).

* Aliâ manu et atramento extra lineæ seriem addita est in hoc codice (teste Morino Exerc. p. 50.) litera Θ , et ambesæ paululum O, ut appareat Sigma, sed præpostera emendatio facile conspicitur. Mill. in loc. p. 624.

Ad Claromontanum quod attinet, primum Latina versio, quæ inde ab antiquissimis temporibus constanter quod habebat, dubitare nos non fuit, in codice hoc, qui a vetusta Latina translatione fere nunquam discrepat, ab initio δ lectum fuisse. Deinde emendationis recentioris, qua ex O factum est $\Theta\Sigma$, indicia supersunt, &c. Griesbach. Præf. ad Epistol. p. 9.

† Erpenius's Arabic reads δ

“ With

“ With the ancienter versions (says Sir
 “ Isaac Newton*) agree the writers of the
 “ first five centuries, both *Greeks* and *Latins*.
 “ For they, in all their discourses to prove
 “ the Deity of the son, never alledge this
 “ text, (as I can find) as they would all
 “ have done; (and some of them frequently,)
 “ had they read, *God was manifest in the*
 “ *flesh*, and therefore they read ò. Tertul-
 “ lian (*adversus Praxeam*) and Cyprian (*ad-*
 “ *versus Judæos*) industriously cite all the
 “ places, where Christ is called *God*; but
 “ have nothing of this. Alexander of Alex-
 “ andria, Athanasius, the bishops of the
 “ council of Sardica, Epiphanius, Basil,
 “ Gregory Nazianzen, Gregory Nyssen,
 “ Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyril of
 “ Alexandria; and among the Latins, Hi-
 “ lary, Lucifer, Jerom, Ambrose, Austin,
 “ Phæbadius, Victorinus Afer, Faustinus
 “ Diaconus, Pope Leo the Great, Arnobius
 “ junior, Cerealis, Vigilus Tapsensis, Ful-
 “ gentius, wrote all of them in the fourth

* Letters to Le Clerc. p. 85, 86, 87.

“ and

“ and fifth centuries for the Deity of the son,
 “ and incarnation of God, and some of them
 “ largely, and in several tracts; and yet I
 “ cannot find, that they ever alledge this
 “ text to prove it.

“ In all the times of the hot and lasting
 “ Arian controversy, it never came into play;
 “ though now, that those disputes are over,
 “ they, that read *GOD was manifest in the*
 “ *flesh*, think it one of the most obvious and
 “ pertinent texts for the business.

“ The churches therefore of those ages
 “ were absolute strangers to this reading.
 “ For, on the contrary, their writers, as
 “ often as they have occasion to cite the
 “ reading then in use, discover that it was
 “ *o (which)*. For though they cite it not
 “ to prove the Deity of the son; yet in their
 “ commentaries, and sometimes in their
 “ other discourses they produce it.

“ These ancient Latins all cite the text
 “ after this manner, *Great is the mystery of*
 “ *godliness, WHICH was manifest in the flesh*;
 “ as the Latin Mss. of St. Paul's Epistles
 “ generally

“generally have it to this day: and there-
 “fore it cannot be doubted, but that this
 “has been the constant public reading of
 “the Latin churches from the beginning.”

* “All the old versions have it *qui* or
 “*quod*. And *all* the ancient fathers, though
 “the copies of many of them have it now
 “in the text itself, *Deus*, yet from the
 “tenour of their comments upon it, and
 “from their † never citing it in the Arian
 “controversy, it appears they always read it,

* Clarke’s Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity, p. 76.
 edit. 1719.

† E Patribus Catholicis, quibus id operæ datum, ut
 divinitatem Christi locis S. Scripturæ undique conquiritis
 adstruerent; ante annum Christi 380, nemo, quod sciam,
 textum hunc in medium produxit. Gregorius Nyssenus,
 primus omnium, &c. (Mill in loc.)

*No one, that I know, of all the catholic fathers, (says
 Dr. Mill) who professedly collected all the texts of scripture
 in proof of Christ’s divinity, ever alledged this text, before
 the year 380. Gregory Nyssen first of all, &c.*

*Note, It must not be judged from the present copies
 of Nyssen, and others, but from the manner of com-
 menting upon the place, how the text was read in their
 days. Dr. Clarke’s note.*

“ *qui*

“ *qui* or *quod*; till the time of Macedonius,
 “ under the emperor Anastasius, in the be-
 “ ginning of the sixth century. Of the two
 “ passages cited to the contrary by Dr. Mill,
 “ in his Appendix; that from Justin*
 “ Martyr does not prove that he did, but
 “ rather that he *did not*, read it, 9:⊙; and
 “ that from Athanasius, is out of a book
 “ acknowledged to be spurious.”

“ In the days of Julian (says Dr. Clarke
 “ quoted by Mr. Lindsey†) when that em-
 “ peror asserted, that *neither Matthew, Mark,*
 “ *Luke, nor Paul, ever ventured to style Christ,*
 “ *God*; it is plain from Cyril’s answer to the
 “ assertion of Julian, that, even at that time,
 “ the word 9:⊙, *God*, was not found in this
 “ text.”

* Just. Epist. ad Diagnet. ‘Ου χαριν, απετειλε Λογον,
 ινα τω κοσμω φανη* ος υπο λαα ατιμασθεις, δια απολογων
 κηρυχθεις υπο εθνων επιτευθη. But see Just. Rom.
 vol. I. p. 342, &c.

† Script. Doctrine of the Trinity, *but not in my copy*,
 Mill in append. p. 52. Col. ii.

I think

I think there will be need of nothing more to demonstrate that the insertion of the word *God* in this passage is a manifest interpolation.

Indeed, upon serious, and I hope, impartial examination, I cannot avoid expressing my suspicion that this whole verse, and part of the preceding, are mere interpolations.

The language does not seem to be like that of any of the writers of the New Testament; and the sentiments are perfectly inexplicable, whichever of the three readings be adopted. The phrase *ἡτις ἐστὶν ἐκκλησία θεοῦ ζώντος* (*which is the church of the living God*) is a mere gloss of *ἐν οἴκῳ θεοῦ* (*in the house of God*). *Στυλὴ καὶ ἐδραῖωμα τῆς ἀληθείας* (*the pillar and ground of truth*) is such language as does not appear to be warranted by any passage in the New Testament.

The sixteenth verse has no connexion with the fifteenth, and might as properly follow any other passage of the New Testament, as that to which it is annexed.

Besides,

Besides, if θεοῦ (*God*) be the reading, what can be the meaning of εδικαιώθη εν πνευματι, ωφθη ανγγελοις, and ανεληφθη εν δοξη (*was justified in the spirit, was seen of angels; was received up into glory*)? If οἱ (*who*) be read, to what antecedent does it refer? It cannot refer to μυστηριον (*mystery*); and to suppose that it refers to Χριστοῦ (*Christ*) understood, is a construction so forced, that I can scarcely think a parallel instance is to be found. If ἡ (*which*) be the reading, what can be the meaning of ανεληφθη εν δοξη (*was received up into glory,*)?

And if either the one or the other of these three be the reading, what is meant by πιστευθη εν κοσμῳ (*was believed on in the world*)? which phrase, if it does not signify, *was believed through ALL the world*, can have no meaning of importance at all; and if it has that meaning, it was by no means a fact in the time of the apostles.

On these accounts, with all due deference to those who, being better informed, entertain different sentiments, and with a sincere inclination to acknowledge my errors in this,
and

and all other cases, I confess myself inclined to adopt the idea, that the following words are an interpolation; *which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. And without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh; justified in the spirit; seen of angels; preached unto the Gentiles; believed in the world; received up into glory.**

I John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of GOD, because he laid down his life for us.* The words, *of God* were admitted into the text by the English translators from the Latin Vulgate, because they supported the proper Deity

* I am also not without my doubts concerning Phil. ii. 5—8. which seems to be made up of the original text of St. Paul, and some later gloss. Perhaps the original reading was thus;

Ὁς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπαρχων, εἰς ἀρπαγμαὶν ἡγήσατο, ἀλλ' ἐταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν, τὴν θελοῦ μορφὴν λαβὼν; καὶ ὑπηκούσας ἐγενεὶο μέχρι θανάτου.

Who, though in the form of God, did not regard it as an object to be eagerly sought after; but humbled himself, by taking the form of a slave, and was in a state of subjection till his death.

Deity of Jesus Christ. But they have not the authority of a single Greek MS. nor do they indeed occur in any printed Greek edition, except the Complutensian; into which the words $\tau\epsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ were copied from the Rhodian MS. which was never seen by any one but the compilers of that edition; and if in existence, may be now in the king of Spain's library. Be it where it will, it is a MS. of no authority, being manifestly interpolated from the Latin Vulgate.

And now, Sir, to come to the celebrated text, 1 John v. 7, 8. There are three that bear record [*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth*]

The rest appears to me a marginal gloss, in which $\mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$ is explained by $\tau\omicron\ \epsilon\iota\upsilon\alpha\iota\ \iota\varsigma\alpha\ \theta\epsilon\omega\ ;\ \epsilon\tau\alpha\pi\epsilon\iota\upsilon\omega\sigma\epsilon\upsilon\ \epsilon\alpha\upsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon$, by $\epsilon\alpha\epsilon\iota\omicron\upsilon\ \upsilon\kappa\epsilon\upsilon\omega\sigma\epsilon$; $\delta\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\ \mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta\ \lambda\alpha\beta\omega\upsilon$ by $\epsilon\upsilon\ \delta\mu\omicron\iota\omega\mu\alpha\iota\ \alpha\upsilon\delta\rho\omega\pi\omega\upsilon\ \gamma\epsilon\upsilon\omicron\mu\epsilon\upsilon$, και $\sigma\chi\eta\mu\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\upsilon\rho\epsilon\delta\epsilon\iota\varsigma\ \omega\varsigma\ \alpha\upsilon\delta\rho\omega\pi\omega\ ;$ and $\theta\alpha\upsilon\alpha\iota\varsigma$ by $\theta\alpha\upsilon\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \delta\epsilon$ (perhaps $\delta\eta$) $\tau\alpha\upsilon\rho\epsilon$. This does not appear to be unnatural. But I propose it as a conjecture only.

the

the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.

Concerning this, though it may be sufficient to urge as a complete proof of the inauthenticity of the words included within brackets, that they exist in no ancient Greek manuscript,* are unknown in any ancient version, excepting the Latin Vulgate and the Armenian; and that even in these, they have been inserted in modern times only; the old manuscripts of both of them, being without these words: that they are quoted by none of the Greek fathers of any age, nor even

* The Dublin MS. is modern, and the Berlin a forgery, written from the Complutensian edition, and consequently long after the invention of printing. There are two others indeed, mentioned by Matthæi, which have the disputed passage, but one of these, which is of the thirteenth century, has it in the margin, from a later hand; and the other MS. is manifestly of no authority, as it has also the versions of Castalio, Erasmus and Beza. See Matthæi in Marc. Append. p. 319, 320. and p. 361. ad Apocalypf. Append. p. 221. &c.

by any of the Latins * before the time of Vigilius Tapsensis, who lived in the fifth century : yet, as, by publishing, contrary to my wish and desire, the letter and postscript which have given occasion to these replies, you have held me up as declaring Mr. Travis to be a plagiarist and a wilful misrepresenter ; I shall

* Cyprian's supposed quotation is a mere allusion to the eighth verse, (see Pere Simon's Dissertation Critique) at the end of his *Histoire des principaux Commentateurs*, p. 80—88. And Eucherius's is a mere interpolation. (See Griesbach in 1 John v. 7. p. 231.) The other instances produced by the advocates of this verse from the Latin fathers, before Vigilius, are neither quotations nor authorities. A good view of the subject may be had from Dr. Mill, Bengelius, Wurfstein, Griesbach, and Matthæi on 1 John v. 7. Martin on the genuineness of this passage. Emlyn's Dissertations in his Tracts, vol. II. Sir Isaac Newton's Letter to Le Clerc on 1 John v. 7. Benson's Dissertation on this text at the end of his paraphrase on the first Epistle of John. Wolfii Curæ Philologicae, vol. V. p. 293—314. P. Simon *Histoire Critique du Texte du Nouv. Test.* cap. xviii. and *Histoire des Versions*, cap. ix. (in which last are some curious remarks concerning the older Mss. of the Latin Vulgate in this passage) Travis's Letters to Gibbon, Porson's

I shall not start from my charge, but do again declare, that he is both the one and the other.

Of this assertion I have put it in your own power to judge from the instances of Martin and Benson. But as general expressions convey no proof, I will lay before you a few instances, from which you may be enabled to judge of the rest.

Of plagiarism indeed, I cannot produce many single and particular ones; because Mr. Travis's book, at least, as much as makes up the substance of his three first letters, (which indeed contain the whole of the argument, if it can be called such) is

Porson's Letters to Travis; and the controversy between Stunica and Erasmus in the *Critici Sacri*, vol. IX. p. 3547. 3617. Others also have treated on the same subject, but either not fully, or their writings have not fallen into my hands.

As this interpolated passage first appeared in the Complutensian edition, and from thence was copied into Robert Stephens's of 1550, a good account of these two editions may be found in Wettstein's *Prolegomena* to his *G. Test.* p. 116—120, 142—146.

entirely taken, without acknowledgment, from Martin, on the genuineness of the text in question. Particularly, the argument relating to Stephens's Mss. on which all the weight of the cause rests, is taken from Martin almost verbatim, and yet in such a manner, as to insinuate that Martin's account was *very inadequate and defective*,* but his own complete and accurate. The contrary to which is the truth; Mr. Travis having not only made scarcely any improvement on Martin, but even fallen into blunders, which Martin himself, guided probably by the information of Dr. Mill, had avoided.†

As

* Travis against Gibbon, p. 129. note.

† The only additions which Mr. Travis has made to Martin's authorities from Stephens, which are not remarked as errors in Stephens, by Dr. Mill, are Acts xxiv. 8. xxvii. 1. xxviii. 11. on the MS. *n*; Matt. xii. 32. in *1a*, Acts xiii. 15. (*which is an error for δ, and ι is misplaced*) in *1d*, and 1 Timothy! (the place not mentioned, which is 1 Tim. iii. 3.) in *1e*. Indeed, in his account of this last MS. he gives no particular references. Why, he knows best himself.

As to misrepresentation, he is guilty of it in his account of what Pere Simon says concerning Walafrid Strabo's glossa (comp. Trav. p. 22. with P. Simon Hist. Crit. des Commentateurs, cap. xxviii.) in his mutilation of Emlyn's evidence concerning the authority of Eucherius, where he suppresses the whole of Emlyn's arguments, in the very part where their force is the greatest; (p. 80. compared

himself. His other *improvements* are the very errors, which Martin has taken care, to steer clear of. So that though Martin is guilty of many blunders in this part of his work, Mr. Travis blunders still more. Thus, Martin quotes John ii. 7. and omits Matt. xxvii. 64. from the MS. 17, because Mill had said justly, that 17 is an error in Stephens for 18 (Proleg. 1173.) Mr. Travis inserts it, because R. Stephens can commit *no errors*. Martin takes no notice of the MS. ε, because the two passages in the Apocalypse to which it refers, are errors for 12 (Mill. *ibid.* 1165.) Mr. Travis *produces* them as readings of that MS. and lastly, with respect to the Mss. of R. Stephens in general, Mr. Martin is totally silent as to the account which Dr. Mill gives of them (Proleg. 1159—1176) because he could not be insensible that this is taken from Stephens's margin. Mr. Travis says that

compared with Emlyn's Tracts, 491—491. edit. 1719 or vol. II. p. 193. &c. of the later editions.) in his reference to Erasmus, concerning the Codex Britannicus, where he omits the principal part of the sentence, because it would overthrow his own argument, and misrepresents the design of the rest; (p. 139. *compared with the references to Erasmus in the same page*) in his interpretation of a passage from Montfaucon* (p. 158.);
in

Dr. Mill's "errors have originated in the idea that Stephens's Mss. are yet existing," (Travis, p. 136. note) when it appears plain from both the Prolegomena, and the various readings of Dr. Mill's G. Testament, that he had *never seen* these Mss. and drew his conclusions from Stephens's margin only, without any regard to the existence of these Mss. Is such a man as this, fit to decide so positively as he does, on a subject which calls for the most accurate criticism? See Martin on the Genuineness of 1 John v. 7. part II. cap. vi. compared with Travis's Letters to Gibbon, p. 127—138.

* Mr. Travis, here, uses both Montfaucon and his own friend Martin very ill. For Montfaucon speaking of the dotted iotas and upsilons, which are found in many Greek

in his statement of the Mss. in which, he pretends, Wetstein must have found the verse; (p. 282—285.) and, as Mr. Porson has shown, (Pref. p. 14.) in his account of the Berlin MS. as communicated by Mr. Zöellner.

With respect to Benson, Mr. Travis (p. 158.) takes a sentence from the middle of his chief argument relating to the Dublin

Greek Mss. says, that *they have been in use for these thousand years*; (*Ab annis plus mille literæ i et v, quando alteri vocali non junguntur, nec diphthongum efficiunt, punctis supernè notantur. Palæog. Græc. p. 33.*) Martin, following his authority says the same; “this manner of marking the i’s and the v’s is above a thousand years old.” To which he adds, “I know very well, that it does not thence follow, that we can ascribe such an antiquity to all the Mss. where it is found” (Genuineness, p. 163.). But Mr. Travis, who copies the latter of these authors, and refers to the former particularly, (which Martin does not) perverts the meaning of both; and declares positively, that “the method of pointing i and v with double dots, by the TESTIMONY of MONTFAUCON, the most competent to decide a question of this nature, shows a MS. to be MORE than a THOUSAND YEARS OLD.” What can we think of such a man?

MS.

MS. and passes over the argument itself, thus leading the reader to suppose that Benson had nothing to produce on the subject. He has mutilated Benson's argument against the text from the silence of the Greek fathers; (p. 210.) in replying (p. 215, 216.) to Benson's argument against the text, from its not being quoted by the author of the baptism of heretics, he suppresses one half of the passage which he quotes from Du Pin, because it makes directly against him: and (which though not chargeable to wilful misrepresentation, yet is an argument of that culpable prejudice which will neither examine itself nor attend to the examination of others;) asserts the immaculate purity of R. Stephens's text and margin; (p. 12, 117—120.) though, from his own *opportunities of examining it*, he might easily have found, what I have, that besides the errors which Stephens himself has marked, the text contains not fewer than *sixty* typographical mistakes; some in the words, others in the references, and not a small number in what Mr. Travis depends upon chiefly,

chiefly, the obelus and semicircle;—and that the errors in the margin are innumerable.

Lastly, as a close of all his observations, he expresses himself concerning Dr. Benson, who has been allowed by all, except Mr. Travis, to have been a fair and impartial examiner; in the following illiberal terms. (p. 221.)

“ Thus I beg leave to dismiss for the present his (Dr. Benson’s) dissertation; which
 “ for *intrepidity of assertion* [i. e. *lying*] *disingenuousness of quotation*, and *defectiveness of conclusion*, has no equal, stands aloof beyond
 “ all parallel, as far as my reading extends,
 “ either in ancient or modern times.”

Without remarking, (what is the truth) that Mr. Travis is here characterising *himself*; it must be acknowledged, that wherever Dr. Benson’s arguments were defective, or weak, Mr. Travis had most certainly a right to discover and expose them; but this should have been done with liberality and candour. By this the world would have been benefited, and for this they ought to have thanked him.

Bagildo

But

But when in addition to misrepresentation, indulgence is given to abuse and invective; the person, who like Mr. Travis, is guilty of these, ought to be told, that insolence and falsehood claim as their recompense, INDIGNATION and CONTEMPT.

But on this I shall dwell no longer. I wait only for Mr. Travis's third edition, in which he has promised a reply to all the observations which have been communicated to him; and then, if the public will give me a patient hearing, I hope to go through a complete examination of all his remarks, with *something more of the spirit of meekness*, than he has condescended to show the late Dr. Benson, or the present most able and candid critic Dr. Griesbach. The work indeed has been finished above twelve months since, before the publication of Mr. Porson's Letters in one volume, though not before their appearance in the Gentleman's Magazine, under the name of Cantabrigiensis. From these I have derived some material helps, for which I regard myself as much obliged

obliged to him. Others I have received from my friends, to whom I now make my acknowledgments.

Particularly I should account myself guilty of an inexcusable neglect, if I did not return my thanks to Dr. Newcome Bishop of Waterford, by whose means I have been favoured with a complete collation of the Dublin MS. in the three Epistles of John, that of Jude, and part of the Revelations. This has been the more acceptable, not only as these parts of scripture have never been before collated with this MS; but, as it has afforded me *a certain conclusion*, that the MS. itself is *modern* and of *no authority*; and, in the text in question particularly, is *a mere version from the Latin Vulgate, executed in a most clumsy and bungling manner.*

It is with pleasure I find from his Lordship's own information, and that of Dr. Barret of Trinity college, Dublin (to whom also I have great reason to be obliged) that an edition of the Greek Testament is preparing at that University, which is to be collated with the

Mss.

Mss. there, and particularly with the Montfort, or, as I have all along called it, the Dublin MS.

To return to other instances of interpolations.

Rev. i. 11. The common reading is, "saying, [*I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, and*] what thou seest, write in a book."

Of these, the words inclosed in brackets, are wanting in the Alexandrian, the Basilian, and the Ephrem Mss. (which are all *very ancient* ones of this part of the scripture) in seventeen more, quoted by Griesbach; and in four, by Matthæi. They do not occur in the Latin Vulgate, Syriac, Coptic, Ethiopic, or Armenian versions; nor in Arethas, Andreas, or Primasius. And yet in the face of all this evidence they are continued in the English translation. But they are rejected in the Complutensian, Bengelius's, Griesbach's and Matthæi's editions.

These, you will urge, are interpolations of small passages. I will therefore now present

sent you with one of a larger extent. This is the account in St. John's gospel, of the woman taken in adultery. In this part of scripture, there are no fewer than twelve verses (from ch. vii. 52. to ch. viii. ver. 11.) which are spurious. For it appears that they had no existence either in the Alexandrian MS. or the Ephrem; both which, though defective here, show, from the quantity of vacant space, that this history was not intended to be contained in them: it is plainly wanting in the Vatican, in Stephens's Eighth, and in Reuchlin's; in which last, to determine the inauthenticity of the story, is found the following observation:*

"I have omitted the story of the adulterous
 "woman, in the gospel of John, *as being*
 "*wanting in most copies*, and not mentioned
 "by the holy fathers, Chrysostom, Cyrill,
 "Theodorus, and others."

This declaration, in so old a MS. as one of the tenth century, which is the age of the Reuchlin MS. will decide the matter, and

* See Wettstein in loc. and Griesbach.

plainly

plainly establish the inauthenticity of the passage in question.*

The argument which I draw from these instances, is this; that if, in the later ages, when the number of the Mss. of the New Testament must be great, such interpolations could not only pass unnoticed, but

* To these, besides others which I have omitted as not of the same importance, might be added the following, discovered by Dr. Pearce in his Paraphrase;

“ Rom. i. 31. where *αυνηεις* is expunged; Rom. ii. 28. *εν σαρκι*, but in which, according to Hare, the spurious reading is *εν τη φανερα*. In 1 Cor. i. 12. *εγω δε Χριστι*. 1 Cor. xii. 28. *αντιληψεις, κυβερνησεις*. 2 Cor. x. 11. *δι' επιστολων*. Eph. ii. 5. *Χαρις εστε σωσμενοι*, and Rom. xiii. 4. *εις οργην*.” (See Epist. duæ ad the end of vol. II. of his Commentary, p. 471—475.

These conjectures he proposes with great diffidence and modesty; for, says he, (p. 471.) and I too most sincerely join with him in the same sentiment; “ ad divinum verbum legendum, multo magis EMENDANDUM, oportet Criticos *humiliter*, cauteque accedere: hic *audere* est *peccare*, arrogantem se gerere, est impium esse: tanti enim res momenti non sunt leni (ut aiunt) manu movendæ; nec *Modestus Christianus*, potest esse “idem Audax Criticus,” p. 471.

even

even be perpetuated to the present times; it cannot be very surprising, that, when the copies were few, and the opportunities of correction proportionably less; greater corruptions should insinuate and extend themselves.

This may also show, why Juttin's appeal to Quirinus's registers, might, even upon the supposition of its being early examined still obtain a general admission; and why no notice should appear to be taken of any important corruptions in the christian religion.

To close the whole. There is a most important interpolation, which took place in an inquiring age, and has still passed, in some measure, undetected. This is, the first clause in the twentieth article of the English church-establishment: "*the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith.*"

This had no existence at the time of framing these articles by the convocation, in 1562, and is totally inconsistent both with

the preceding article, and the clauses of the very article, of which it is a part. It was equally unknown to the convocation in 1571, nor was it contained in the *imprinted* book then ratified by parliament.* Dr. Fuller acknowledges

* See Collins's *Priestcraft in perfection*. Confessional, p. 15. *note*. and 367—372. *note*. in which last, the following passages are worthy of peculiar regard: "Mr. Hales's letter to Abp. Laud—written in 1636"—has a passage in it, that carries with it a strong "presumption that the first clause in our twentieth "article, concerning church authority, was not, at "that time, held for authentic. The passage I mean is "this: *I count in point of DECISION OF CHURCH "QUESTIONS, I say, of the AUTHORITY OF THE "CHURCH, that it was NONE; I know of no adversary "I have, the church of Rome only excepted. For this cannot "be true, except we make the church JUDGE OF CON- "TROVERSIES, the CONTRARY to which we generally "MAINTAIN against THAT church.* Would Hales "have said this, and said it too to such a man as Laud, "if he might have been confronted with an *authentic "book of articles?*

"Heylin tells us, that in 1634 *Latin* copies of the "articles were printed at Oxford, without the clause. "I have now before me a *Latin* edition of the articles, "without

acknowledges that it had no existence at that time; and the *Syntagma Confessionum*, published at Geneva in 1612, which I have now before me, though it gives a perfectly accurate view of the other articles, expresses the twentieth in these words;

Ecclesiæ non licet quicquam constituere quod verbo dei adversetur, &c. entirely omitting the clause in question; which is perfectly correspondent to the article in Edward the sixth's time, 1552. *It is not lawful for the church to ordain any thing that is repugnant to God's word, &c.*

If therefore an article of such importance as this, *on which alone the claims of the church are or can be founded*; should have passed so

“without the clause, printed at Oxford, by Leonard
 “Litchfield, printer to the university, in the year 1636.
 “And this brings us down to the date of Hales's letter
 “to Laud, the expression in which letter is equal to a
 “thousand witnesses, that the first clause of the twentieth
 “article, as it now stands in our present editions, was not
 “held, by the most learned and judicious divines of those
 “days, to be of the LEAST AUTHORITY, whether it was
 “found in Latin or English copies.”

quietly, even in an inquiring age; be continued down to the present times, and even acquire so much force, that every clergyman of the English hierarchy is obliged to subscribe it, though it is a most *obvious and shameful ecclesiastical forgery*; little need it be wondered, that the opinion of Justin, or the spurious chapters prefixed to the gospels of St. Matthew and Luke should be suffered to obtain an easy reception, in an age, when there was neither opportunity, inclination, nor ability, to collate copies, or enter into any close and accurate examination.

I am, Sir,

Your sincere friend

and brother in the gospel,

JOHN POPE.

STAND, June 28, 1791.

APPENDIX.

OBSERVATIONS

ON MR. WAKEFIELD'S CRITICISMS ON MATT. xiv. 5.

I LITTLE thought of troubling the reader with any more observations, on subjects, which I fear he may regard as having already engrossed too much of his time; but as Mr. Wakefield has represented the remarks which I sent to him on Matt. xxvii. 5. and which I was necessarily led to touch upon in page 314, as proceeding from *my ignorance of his meaning*, in his *Silva Critica*, § 84. and commentary on St. Matthew; I cannot do justice to myself, and to the subject in discussion, without spending a few more pages in a particular consideration of it. And if I am so unhappy as to differ from him, in this,

or indeed in any thing else; provided I state my sentiments with fairness, and support them by arguments, not unworthy of attention; I have such confidence in the judgment of the public, as not to fear that I shall fall under the same censure with them, as Mr. Wakefield uncandidly and unjustly pronounces on all those who entertain the ideas which I have advanced. *Spuria autem pronunciare, quæ non intelligunt, ideoque è textu esse ejicienda strenuè contendere, ut quibusdam mos, qui ERITICI FIDERI VOLUNT NEC SUNT, summe est et TEMERITATIS et IGNORANTIAE.*

I should be sorry, for Mr. Wakefield's sake, to translate these words. It is not impossible, but *self-application* may lead him (if the *Silva* should ever come to a second edition) to cancel them. In the mean time, if the following remarks may contribute in any respect to the correction of his ideas, or the softening his unjustifiable asperities of language, they are at his service. If they are just, they may do him good; if unjust, I engage

I engage on the faith of an honest man, fairly, and openly, to retract them.

St. Matthew (ch. xxvii. 5.) says of Judas, that after he had betrayed Christ, *and saw* *απνέετο*, which Mr. Wakefield renders, *and when he was gone, he was* CHOKED WITH GRIEF. In which version, I suppose the words *with grief* are added *ex conjectura*, as there is *no trace of them in the original*. This hardly looks with a favourable aspect on so singular a translation.

The design, however, with which Grotius and others, and after them, Mr. Wakefield, have advanced this conjecture, being in order to reconcile this account of St. Matthew with that of St. Luke in Acts i. 18. certainly merits no small commendation. But this is merely a theological consideration, and ought to follow, not to precede the just *meaning* of scripture words. This last is the province of criticism; which therefore should properly be the guide of the other.

In this view I regard Mr. Wakefield's criticism as having no foundation in

one single classical, or scriptural authority, with which I am acquainted. At least I cannot find *one passage* in any author, in which the verb *αναρχομαι* is applied to death occasioned by distress of mind, unless accompanied with expressions which necessarily restrict its meaning to this only. Every one may easily see that this is not the case in the present passage of St. Matthew.

The instances cited by Dr. Scott,* are all, I should think, unquestionable. Mr. Wakefield

* Dr. Scott's note is as follows:

"Hanged himself] Gr. *αναρχας*. Syr. *He strangled his soul*, i.e. himself. That version uses the same word for *αναρχω*. Luke viii. 33. *to be choked*; and *επιαναρχω*, Matt. xiii. 22. and *ανρω*, Matt. xviii. 28. *to choke*, as also for *σενοχωρεω*, *to be distressed*, 2 Cor. iv. 8.

"Let the reader examine whether *αναρχομαι* does not signify to strangle or hang one's self, in the following authors.

"Phar. Lex. p. 102. 2. *Αναρχαλο*, *εποχον* *η* *η*. So also Suidas. Lex. I. 262.

"Thucyd. Hist. lib. IV. § 48, p. 267. 72. [vol. IV. p. 128,

Wakefield himself, in his comment on St. Matthew, allows those from *Thucydides*, *Lucian*, *Strabo*, and *Ælian*, (though he has controverted this last in his *Silva Critica*) to

“ p. 128, edit. *Fonlis*.] Οἱ πολλοὶ θάνατον αὐτοῖς διαφθεῖν

“ — ἐκ κλινῶν τῶν, αἱ εὐτυχὲς αὐτοῖς εὐσταί, τοὺς σπαρα-

“ γοῖς, καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἱμακτικῶν παρσισημαῖα ποιῆσαι, ἀπαγ-

“ χομινοὶ πάντι τροπῇ το πολὺν τῆς νυκτὸς — ἀκαθύνει θάνατον

“ αὐτοῖς, &c. This remarkable passage is cited by

“ J. Poll. in *Onomastic*. lib. X. § 37, p. 1184:

“ *Ælian*. V. *Hist*. lib. V. cap. 8. Σαφρῶν, μὲν γὰρ

“ πομπὴν αὐτοῦ, εὐλαΐα. Πολύγυρος δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ.

“ *Lucian*, *Philopseud*. p. 840. A. Εἰς τὴν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ, ἢ

“ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ τὴν κεφαλὴν, ἢ ἀνεσθαισιαν, ἢ ἀλλῶν τῶν

“ τροπῶν τοῦτον ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίης, &c.

“ *Herodotus*. *Hist*. lib. II. § 131, p. 138. Μᾶλλον δὲ, ἢ

“ γὰρ, ὡς ἡ πᾶσι ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ ὑπο ἀχρῶν.

“ *Strabo*. *Geog*. lib. XII. p. 950. D. Ἀξίων Ἑρμῶν,

“ says *Hieracius*, ἡρῶν ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς βίης, ἢ ἀπὸ τῆς

“ — ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ. *Diogenes Laertius* represents this phi-

“ losopher, as using the general word ἀποθνήσκειν, instead

“ of that particular kind of death, expressed here by

“ ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτοῦ, lib. IX. § 2, p. 549. So also *Cicero*

“ translates this passage in *Tusc. Disp*. lib. V. § 6, p. 424.

“ *Universos autem Epictetus esse moris mulieris, &c. vide*

“ *Jamblick*. de vit. *Pythag*. § 173, p. 176.”

give

give no countenance to his conjectures. To which, indeed, he might have added the two others; for they seem to me capable of none but the common interpretation. Particularly, it is worthy of observation, that Phavorinus and Suidas agree in explaining *ἀνρύττα*, by *σποχόν* *ἡδον*; both of them using the same word, and the same explanation of that word.

Mr. Wakefield thinks that Herodotus (lib. II. § 131.) takes the word in the sense affixed to it in the *Silva*. But I do not see the necessity or propriety of this.

In the situation to which the daughter of Mycerinus was reduced, a *voluntary death* would be the probable consequence of her grief and shame. Does not *ἀνρύττα* in its most *natural and obvious sense* plainly express this? Why then seek for so *forced* a meaning, which indeed is not rendered at all probable by the circumstances of the story; and would, perhaps, never have been thought of, but for the supposed contradiction between the two evangelists?

This

This is not clearing up difficulties in the New Testament by means of the ancient Greek authors, but interpreting these authors by the New Testament; and making a supposed doubtful word in the latter, the rule of interpretation with respect to obvious and plain expressions in the former. Would not this overthrow every principle of just criticism?

So, in the same author (lib. VII. § 232.)* were it even granted that ἀπαγέσθαι with ἀντι or some such word added to it, might be capable of a sense similar to that which Mr. Wakefield assigns, (which is at the utmost hardly probable) yet the common meaning is so natural, and consistent with the situation of the person concerning whom the narrative is related, that there is not the least ground for the singular interpretation adopted by Mr. Wakefield.

* Λεγέται δὲ καὶ ἄλλον ἀποπεμφθεὶς ἀγγελοῦ—περιγενεσθαι—νοσησαῖα δὲ τέλει ἐς Σπάρτην, ὡς ἩΤΙΜΩΤΟ, ΑΠΑΓΕΑΣΘΑΙ.

Απαγέσθαι

Ἀναγκάσει με νόστος in Theocritus (Idyll. III. 9.) plainly means, *you will make me HANG MYSELF.* Virgil's, *mori me demique coges*, (Eclog. II. 7.) is a translation of this passage, only *softened*, as Virgil generally does by the rough expressions of Theocritus; and yet, softened as it is, it more obviously refers to a *voluntary*, than to a natural death.

The same is the sense of *ἀναγκάσει* in Ælian. (Var. Hist. lib. V. cap. viii.) The story there related concerning Poliager, is much the same as that of the effect produced by the Satires of Archilochus on the daughters of Lycambes. Nor does the use of the word *ἀναγκάσει* in the former sentence at all prove that *ἀναγκάσει* must be taken in the sense which Mr. Wakefield supposes: for *ἀναγκάσει* may, with as much propriety, mean that the *ἑρωμυαία* caused Poliager to *kill himself*, as that they caused him to *die with grief*. It is a mode of expression common to all languages.

OTIMITHI
BESIDES,

Besides, *Ælian* himself uses the word *ἀπαγχω* in the same sense. (lib. IV. cap. i. p. 253. edit. Kühnii.) Βεβρυκται τῆς ὑπερ ἰσθμίου-
 κούλας ἐπὶ τῇ βεβρυκτοῦσας ΑΠΟΚΤΕΙΝΟΤΕΙ, τὰς μὲν ἀνδρας
 καταδυνούεις, ΑΠΑΓΧΟΝΤΕΣ δὲ τὰς γυναίκας. This
 is an instance so clear, that it ought to decide
 the meaning of *ἀπαγχω* in the former place.

In *Dionysius Halicarnassensis* also (vol. VI. p. 884. edit. Reiske) the same word is used
 in the same sense, Εξ δένδρων τινες ἀπαγχονίζοιτο,
 which is a phrase similar to Matt. xxvii. 5.

I cannot find the word *ἀπαγχωμα* in *Plu-
 tarch de liberis educandis*, either at p. 9. in
Xylander's edition, or in *Reiske's* (vol. VI.
 p. 30. under N°. 9.) But in both editions
 there is the following passage. Ὡς περ γὰρ τὰ
 φυτὰ τοῖς μὲν μέρσις ὕδασι τρεφεταί, τοῖς δὲ πολλοῖς
 ΠΙΝΙΕΤΑΙ, τὸν αὖτις τροπὸν ψυχῇ τοῖς μὲν συμμέτροις
 αὐξεται πόνοις, τοῖς δ' ὑπερβαλλούσι βαρύνεται. But
 surely Mr. Wakefield will not produce this
 as an instance by way of determining the
 meaning of the word *ἀπαγχωμα*, when there
 are so many other places in *Plutarch* in
 which

which ἀπαγχοναῖ itself occurs. Thus (Vita. Thesei. § 20. sub init) it is said concerning Ariadne, Οἱ μὲν γὰρ ΑΠΑΓΧΑΣΘΑΙ φασιν αὐτὴν ἀπολειφθεῖσαν ὑπο τῆς Θησεως, &c. (Caton. maj. § 10. sub fin) *Paccus*, one of Cato's servants, having bought three captive children, contrary to Cato's order, and fearing the consequence of Cato's having discovered what he had done, πρὶν εἰς οὐκιν [Καίων] εἰδέναι, ΑΠΗΓΧΑΣΑΤΟ. And the women, among the Cimbri, after the defeat of their army by Marius (vit. Marii § 27.) Τα νηπια τῶν τεκνῶν ΑΠΑΓΧΟΥΣΑΙ τὰς χερσιν, ἐρρίψον ὑπο τῆς τροχῆς, &c.*

I am a little surprised that these instances did not occur to Mr. Wakefield; the last

* To these might be added the following passage from *Polybius* (*Histor. lib. XVI. § 19, vol. II. p. 455, edit. Ernesti.*) Θεωρῶν δὲ [Φιλίππ] το πλεθ[όν] [τῶν Αβυδηνῶν] καὶ τὴν ὁρμὴν τῶν σφῆς αὐλῆς, καὶ τὰ τέκνα, καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας, ἀποσφαίτουσιν, κατακαυνοῦσιν, ΑΠΑΓΧΟΝΤΩΝ, &c. — ἐκπλαγῆς ἦν, καὶ διαλγὼν ἐπὶ τοῖς γυγνομετοῖς, παρηγγεῖλε, διδοὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας ἀνατροφὴν δίδωσι τοῖς βυλομετοῖς ΑΠΑΓΧΕΣΘΑΙ καὶ σφαίτειν αὐλῆς.

especially,

especially, which is so very express on this point. I do not however wonder that he has not produced them: for they are all, clear and decisive against him.

No less decisive against him is the following from the same author. (De Adulat. et Amici Discrim. ap. edit. Reiske, vol. VI. p. 261.) Πυθαγόρου δὲ τραχυλερόν ἐν πολλοῖς γυναικὶ προσεχθέντι, ΑΠΑΓΕΑΣΘΑΙ τὸ μείρακιον λεγόντων. Is it not somewhat extraordinary that all these should escape Mr. Wakefield's examination?

The passage in *Lucian's Toxaris* (vol. II. p. 60. edit. Benedict.) plainly admits of the common interpretation only: for certainly ἀπαγξει ἑαυτήν—ὑπο τῆ ἐρωλῆ, if translated, *she will fret herself to death for love*, is not the strong sense which Lucian intended to convey.

It does not appear to me from the Scholiast on Apollonius (lib. I. v. 1063.) that Deilochus, must have used the word ἀπαγχισθαι, in his account of Clite's death. It seems most likely that the expressions which the
Scholiast

Scholiast ascribes to Deilochus, were actually his; at least this conclusion may be fairly deduced from the manner in which they are introduced, (ΦΗΕΙ Δειλοχῶ, ΤΠΟ ΑΥΤΗΣ ΤΕΛΕΥΤΗΣΑΙ) and from their being *contrasted* with the account of Apollonius himself.* Nor is it credible, that the Scholiast should have used *απαρχισθαι* in this sense, when there are so many instances to the contrary. Indeed is there *one* clear instance, in which it is used in Mr. Wakefield's sense?

In Pool's Synopsis, on Matt. xxvii. 5. There is a remark to the same purpose, which deserves to be noticed.

“ *Amyctalo, Laqueo se suspendit, sive, praefocavit, Eras. Illyr. Tig. sive praefocatum iovit, Castal.*”

After which, follow these words of Salmastius; “ *Nec aliter hoc verbo utuntur Graeci Scriptores: Aelianus, Socrates in Scena*

* Ουδε μὲν ἡδ' ἀλοχῶ Κλαίη φθιμένοιο λελειψο

Οὐ ποσιῶ μετοπισθε· καὶ δ' ἐπι, κινέρον αλλο

ἦνυσεν, ΑΥΑΜΕΝΗ ΒΡΟΧΟΝ ΑΥΧΕΝΙ.—

Apoll. lib. I. v. 1063, &c.

“ *derisus*

"*derisus ridebat, Poliagros autem απηγξαλο,*
"se suspendit. In Epigrammate Græco,
 "Αισχυνδεις Πεποσιον, απηγξαλο." i. e. *laqueo se*
suspendit. In alio Epigrammate, και γαμων
 "απηγξαλο."

I cannot help placing great confidence in this observation of Salmasius, not so much on account of his known critical abilities, as that it appears to be supported by every instance which has been hitherto adduced from the Greek authors.

In Andocides (*Orator. Græc. Reiske.* vol. IV. Andocid. p. 62.) is the following passage: Η δε Ισχομαχη θυγατηρ ΤΕΘΝΑΝΑΙ ΝΟΜΙΣΑΣΑ ΑΤΣΙΤΕΛΕΙΝ [μαλλον†] Η ΖΗΝ οραντα τα γιγνομενα, † ΑΠΑΓΧΟΜΕΝΗ μεταξυ ΚΑΤΕΚΛΙΘΗ· και επειδη ΑΝΕΒΙΩ, αποδρασασα εν της αιμας αρχειο, και εξηλασεν η μητηρ την θυγατερα.

Whether the tenour of this passage does not lead to the idea that απαγχομενη refers to

* Vide Brunckii *Analecta*, vol. II. p. 326. N°. 46.

† I add μαλλον on Reiske's authority.

‡ Vide, p. 61, 62.

a *voluntary* death, may be left to the judgment of any one who observes the connexion of the words marked in capitals.

Απαγχόμενη μετὰ κατεκλιθῆ evidently means, that the daughter of Ischomachus had hanged herself, and was found by her friends in such a situation as led them to conclude her dead, and, in consequence, to treat her accordingly; but that she had not continued so long in that state, as to be totally, though she was apparently, lifeless. By their seasonable interposition, *she recovered*, ἀνέβη, and fled from her husband's house.

In this sense, all is plain and consistent. But will any one say, that if ἀπαγχόμενη is to be regarded as signifying that *suffocation which arises from grief*, there is any propriety or consistence in the words, τεθνᾶναι νομισασα λυσιτελεῖν μάλλον ἢ ζῆν ὁρῶσα τὰ γιγνόμενα? And yet on these the whole force and meaning of the passage depends.

I do not say that κατεκλιθῆ never refers to a *person's reclining himself*, in a reciprocal sense. But this is not necessarily, nor always, its signification.

signification. And it is observable, that Reiske himself, in his index to Andocides, interprets the word in the same manner as I have done.

“ *Κατακλινεσθαι in lectum* DEFERRI, COMPONI,
“ *de corpore EXANIMATO, ægrove, somni et*
“ *quietis egente.*”*

The instances produced by Dr. Whitby, in his comment on this verse, confirm the same observations.

Dr. *Hammond* is of the same opinion with Mr. Wakefield, as is also *Heinsius*. The authorities adduced by the former of these commentators do not, however, appear to me, any more to the purpose, than those which have been already remarked on. And those of *Heinsius*, excepting one, which shall be considered presently, bear so near a resemblance to those which Mr. Wakefield has produced, that the examination of the one will be equally an examination of the other.

* Index. Græcitat. Andocid. Orator. vol. VIII.
p. 499.

"Theophylact, (says Dr. Hammond) speaking of the sorrow which the incestuous Corinthian might probably fall into, expresses it by *εις αγκοнын ηξη ως Ισδας.*" Which phrase he renders, *coming to a SUFFOCATION, as Judas did.*

But if Theophylact be suffered to be his own interpreter, it will appear that he regarded *απαγχονισαι* and *εις αγκοнын ηξη* as having the common meaning. For on the very passage which is the subject of consideration, he thus expresses himself; Γνωσθε, οτι ΕΘΗΚΕ ΜΕΝ ΤΟΝ ΤΡΑΧΗΛΟΝ αὐτοῦ, ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΑΓΧΟΝΗΝ, ΑΠΟ ΔΕΝΔΡΟΥ ΤΙΝΟΣ ΚΡΕΜΑΣΑΣ ἑαυτον, &c.*

"Chrysostom," (says the same commentator) uses the phrase *τω συνειδῶσι απαγχεσθαι*, "to be suffocated through grief (strangled, as it were, or) miserably affected with conscience."†

But

* Vide Theophylact. apud Suicer. Thesaur. vol. I. p. 407.

† The passage referred to by Dr. Hammond is the following (*Chrysost. Homil. xx ad Antioch ap. Oper. tom. II.*

p. 202.

But here the word *συνειδῶν* determines the application of *ἀπαγχέσθαι* to be metaphorical, and of consequence plainly shows that this phrase cannot be brought as parallel to that in St. Matthew, in which no qualifying expression occurs.

So

p. 202. A. edit. Montfaucon) Καὶ γὰρ πολλὰ πολλὰκις ἡμαρτήκαμεν τοιαῦτα, ἃ μὴδεὶς ἔλεος οἶδεν· εἰς αὐτοὺς οὐ καλὰ τὴν ἡμέραν ἐκείνην πρὸ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν ἀπαντῶν κείσεται ἡμῶν τὰ ἁμαρτήματα ἐν τῷ κοινῷ τῆς οὐκ ἐμμένης θείᾳ, τῆς ΚΟΛΑΣΕΩΣ ΧΑΛΕΠΙΟΤΕΡΟΝ ΑΛΓΟΤΜΕΝ, ΠΙΝΙΣΤΟΜΕΝΟΙ καὶ ΑΓΧΟΜΕΝΟΙ τῇ συνειδῶν.

Any one who reads this passage will easily see that Chrysostom, being at a loss for words to express the horrors of future punishment, makes use of those terms which are applied to the worst kinds of punishment here below. In this light he regards *πινισθῆναι καὶ ἀγχέσθαι*, and connects them with *συνειδῶν*, in order to convey an idea of the sufferings which the wicked undergo in another world. And this is the sentiment of Le Clerc on the passage in St. Matthew before us; who says plainly, “ In Chrysostomi loco, est *SIMPLEX ἀγχέσθαι*, “ quod aliquando *METAPHORICE* sumitur pro *angore animi*, sed *NON* *EJUSMODI* *SUFFOCATIONE*, Nec “ locus ille quicquam ad rem facit: loquitur enim “ Chrysostomus de malis, qui, ultimo die, revelatis coram

So in another passage produced by Dr. Hammond, and cited by Mr. Wakefield, (Tobit iii. 10.) were it to be granted that ἀπαγῆσθαι might be used in Mr. Wakefield's sense, yet the metaphorical meaning of this word may be ascertained not only from the preceding word ἐλυπηθῆ, but from

“*omnibus eorum peccatis, dicuntur ferè πνιγόμενοι καὶ ἀγχομένοι συνειδόη, suffocati et strangulati conscientia;*
 “*quod non significat id quod Judæ hic tribuitur.*”

Cleric in Matt. xxvii. 5.

So in another place (*Oper.* tom. X. p. 457. D.) Chrysostom uses the phrase, ἀπηχοιζομένην, ἀπεπνιγομένην ὑπο τῆς ἀδυμίας. And in his Homilies on Matthew (*Oper.* tom. VII. p. 806.) he says of Judas, Καὶ ῥίψας τὰ ἀργύρια ἐν τῷ ναῷ, ἀνεχώρησε, καὶ ἀπελθὼν ἀπηγάλο. ΟΥΔΕ ΓΑΡ ΗΝΕΓΚΕ ΤΟ ΣΤΝΕΙΔΟΣ μασιζόν αὐτόν. Which passage both shows the sentiment of Chrysostom concerning the death of Judas, and determines the meaning of πνιγεῖν and ἀγχεῖν to be properly the same as the English version gives, and that they were used by Chrysostom himself *figuratively*, when applied to such expressions as συνειδῶ or ἀδυμία. But will this show these words to be used in the same manner, when there is *no expression* used, nor *intimation* given in the clause itself, that any such sense is intended?

the

the connexion itself; which, on this supposition, would compel a translator to render the words thus, *she was exceedingly grieved, so as to be SUFFOCATED, like a person HANGED.* But what has this to do with the passage in St. Matthew, in which there is neither λυπηω, nor any qualifying expression whatsoever?

But the supposition is itself erroneous, and the word απαγξασθαι in this place is to be taken according to the common acceptation, as is evident from considering the whole passage in a connected view. Ταυτα ακουσασα ελυπηθη σφοδρα, ωστε ΑΠΑΓΞΑΣΘΑΙ. και ειπε, Μια μεν ειμι τω πατρι μου· εαν ποιησω τυλο, ΟΝΕΙΔΟΣ αυλω εσα, και το γηρας αυτης καλαξω μελ' οδυνης εις αιδα.

Dr. Hammond says, that “this is not
“of much validity, because this confide-
“ration might be made use of to dispel her
“melancholy.”

But this does not come up to the strength of the expression, *if I should do so (εαν ποιησω τυλο), it will be a DISGRACE to my father.* A natural death could be no disgrace, but a voluntary one most certainly would be so.

Besides, on the supposition that Dr. Hammond's remark was just, such a consideration would not have been used by *herself*, but suggested by her *friends*; and even then the *ovsid* could not be accounted for. See also *Whitby*, vol. I. p. 226, 227. The *Hebrew* also of *Fagius*, and the *Syriac*, adopt the common interpretation. *Munster's* edition is defective here.

Heinsius, (*Exercitat. Sacr.* p. 76, 77.) in addition to the instances produced by Mr. Wakefield, quotes the *Glossarium Vetus*, which renders *Αρχομαι*, by *Angor*.

But did not *Heinsius* know, that besides that *ango* is derived from *αρχω*, the original meaning of *ango* itself is to *suffocate* or *strangle*? Thus, in *Virgil*, (*Georg.* III. 495.) it is said of canine madness,

-----*Canibus blandis rabies venit, & quatit egros*
Tussis anhelans, ac faucibus Angit obesis.

On which passage it is observable, that *rabies* qualifies the meaning of *angit*, which, without

without such a word, would answer exactly to *αγγω*.

So also in *Ovid* (*Trist.* lib. V. *Eleg.* I. v. 63.) *Strangulat inclusus dolor* (which I suppose is the passage referred to by Mr. Wakefield) is a phrase in which the meaning of *strangulat* is qualified by *dolor*. Both these quotations, however, as they show plainly the proper signification of *angit*, and *strangulat*, demonstrate that these words, singly taken, can have no signification but that which is commonly ascribed to them, and expresses the actions from which this signification is derived.*

When

* That *ango* properly signifies to *strangle* is manifest from *Virgil*, *Æneid* VIII. 260, 261. In *Lucan* also (lib. VI. v. 107.) the stagnant air and waters are said to suffocate,

At liber terræ spatiosis collibus hostis

Aëre non pigro, nec inertibus ANGITUR undis.

But here the *derived* sense of *angitur* is clearly marked out by *aere pigro*, and *inertibus undis*. So that this passage is not at all applicable to those in which *αγγω* is used in an unqualified manner.

Diomedes,

When therefore *Philoxenus*, in the *Glossarium vetus*, explains ἀρχαῖ by *angit*, (as he also does ἀρχόμενοι by *ancti* and ἀρχαί by *angitur*) he plainly does so, both because *ango* in its primary meaning has the same signification as ἀρχω, and is derived from it.*

But does it follow from thence that he would intimate that ἀρχω has as many meanings as *ango*? On the same principle it might be said, that because *vivo* (for instance) in Latin, signifies *to live*, it has all the various significations which the *English* verb has, and that therefore *vivere in domo* is Latin for *to live in a house*. But the erroneousness of such an idea is too manifest to need any proof.

Heinsius refers also (in *Aët.* p. 248. *Exercitat. Sacr.*) to *Aristophanes* (in *Nub.* v.

Diomedes, the grammarian, too, quoted by *Faber* (sub voc. *anga*) gives the same interpretation of this verb. (lib. I. p. 861.) PRÆFOCO, *præfocavi*, *Probus quasi novum vocem miratur. ANGIT enim veteres dicebant.*

* It is worthy of observation, that in this same *Glossarium* ἀνασχομαι is rendered by *SUSPENDO ME.*

778.) as confirming his interpretation in the expression *απαγξαμην τρεχων*. But this is directly against him. For these words are here to be taken in the common sense, as will be evident to any one who examines this and the preceding verses.

Απαγξαθαι is used by Aristophanes also in Nub. 984, and *απαγχει* in *Vespis* 684 in a figurative sense, as appears from the connexion; and perhaps it is taken in the same sense in Nub. 1388. But in none of these passages is it expressed in the absolute and unqualified manner in which it occurs in the verse under consideration. In Pace. v. 795. it is used in the common sense.

Αλχω also occurs in several places of the same author, but in no one, in such a sense as to be favourable to Heinsius's hypothesis.

In the account given of Achitophel (2 Sam. xvii. 23.) the obvious meaning of *απνυξας* is, he *hanged himself*. Indeed the whole tenour of the story leads to this.

According to Dr. Taylor *πατι* is used in three places of the Old Testament, in all of which

which it signifies *strangulare*, and the noun *pinn* *strangulatio*, without the addition of *præ dolore*.* And not only do all the ver-

sions

* Mr. Wakefield says (*Internal Evid. of Christianity*, p. 81, 82.) “the Hebrew word employed upon that occasion” (by which I apprehend he means the occasion of Achitophel’s death) “is *דָּרַק*, which is also adopted “by all the other Oriental versions, to which I have “access, both here, and in St. Matthew, except by “the Coptic and Perfic; who seem, however, to have “followed the usual acceptation of the passage.”

If I rightly understand this passage, Mr. Wakefield means, that *דָּרַק* is interpreted in all the Oriental versions, so as to favour his idea concerning the death of Judas, except the Coptic and Perfic.

As he acknowledges these two to be against him, nothing need be said of them. But what do the other Oriental versions say? If credit is to be given to *Walton’s* translation of these versions in 2 Sam. xvii. 23. the Chaldee paraphrase has, *et Abitophel, &c.—disposuit super hominem domus suæ, et STANGULAVIT SESE, et mortuus est, &c.* The Syriac, *Abitophel autem—disposita re familiari STANGULAVIT SEIPSUM, &c.* Whence then is it, that Mr. Wakefield intimates that these versions favour his supposition?

In

sions agree in the same signification in this verse, but the Targum of Jonathan also says expressly, וּמָתְנוּק מִיתָ, which is translated by Walton, *Et STRANGULAVIT SESE, et mortuus est.* The interpretation of the Rabbins seems to have been more properly a remark

In the case of Judas's death, which is the part under consideration; the Syriac and Perfic render the word *awnykalo*, by *strangulavit sese*; the Arabic, by *suspendit se*, and even the Ethiopic (which, according to Mill, with whom *Westlin* agrees, in his *Proleg.* p. III. is *versio turbida et confusa et sensu nonnunquam toto caelo aberrans.*) renders it, by *strangulatus fuit.* And the Coptic plainly says, *et abiit SUSPENDIT SE.*

Which, therefore, of all these versions will Mr. Wakefield say, had *not* followed the usual acceptance of the passage?

Mr. Wakefield is, in my opinion, rather too bold in the assertion which follows; that “*מָתְנוּק* is *never* once clearly employed to signify HANGING;” which, on the contrary, seems to signify *nothing else*; and the passage in Job (ch. vii. 15.) which he affects to make no account of, though not found in some of the versions, is so expressly against him, and at the same time, so well connected with the preceding and subsequent verses, that it will be no easy matter for him to prove it either *inauthentic* or *improper*.

than

than a version : at least I am led to this conclusion from the following observation of *Malvenda* (in *Pol. Synops.* in 2 Sam. xvii. 23.)

“ Quidam Hebræorum morbo eum suffocatum volunt, ab angina ; absurdum enim putant virum prudentem seipsum suspendisse.”

The sense which Mr. Wakefield gives to the passage which he quotes from the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. xxii. 20. does not seem to me to be supported either by *Walton* or *Buxtorf*. The words in the original are, וקמת שרה ופגנת ואשתונקת ומיתת מן אניקא which *Walton* translates, *tum surrexit Sara, et clamavit, et suffocata est, et mortua præ* AN-GUSTIA. This, if *Buxtorf's Lexicon Chaldaicum* be any authority, is a perfectly accurate translation ; and with this *Castell* in the word אניק (which is much the same as אניקא, and is by *Buxtorf* reckoned under the same head) perfectly agrees.

מן אניקא, *præ angustia, through distress of mind*, are here the qualifying expressions, determining the nature of the event which caused the suffocation and death of Sarah.

But

But this is no pallel to the *absolute* and *unqualified* phrase in St. Matthew. Mr. Wakefield's version, *strangulata est, et mortua est strangulationibus*, even if it conveyed accurate ideas, would make against him.

There is therefore no instance, as far as I can discover, which will warrant the interpretation given by *Hammond*, *Grotius*, *Heinsius*, *Pricæus*, and Mr. *Wakefield*, to Matt. xxvii. 5. But there is one so directly against them, that though it is included in Whitby's authorities, I cannot help producing it. It is in *Arrian* (lib. I. cap. ii. p. 12. edit. Upton). Το απαγγεσθαι εκ τινος αφορητον. Όταν τον πατρι τις ολι ευλοτον, ΑΠΕΛΘΩΝ ΑΠΗΓΕΑΤΟ. Which is the very phrase used by St. Matthew.

Nor can I resist the temptation of inserting a passage from *Artemidorus*, which is referred to by *Pricæus*, as favourable to his idea of the verse before us; but which, on a fair examination, appears to me to have the contrary tendency, and to establish the common interpretation. *Artemidorus* says
(in

(in his book concerning the *Interpretation of Dreams*, lib. II. cap. xxvi.) Ἀναλίσσασθαι καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀναρῆσθαι, διαλεῖς καὶ στενοχωρίας σημαίνει, διὰ τὸ ΣΥΜΒΑΙΝΟΝ τοῖς ΑΠΑΓΧΟΜΕΝΟΙΣ· καὶ προσεῖπεν μὴ μένειν ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, μᾶλλον ὅτις οὐκ ἐστὶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ εὐδαιμονία. Καὶ ἴσως ὁ ΑΠΑΓΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ, ἔστι τῇ Γῇ ΕΠΙΒΑΙΝΕΙ, ἔδε ἐστὶν ΕΠΙ ΕΔΡΑΣ. For here *Artemidorus* speaks both of *hanging*, and of *not remaining at home*, as signifying the same event, and particularly describes the former of these.

Though it may be allowed, that *πνίω* and *ἀποπνίω* are sometimes, or even frequently used in the sense which Mr. Wakefield assigns to them; nay, though they may often include the same meaning with *αἴρω* and *ἀπαἴρω*, it by no means follows that they are all so much of the same signification, as to become convertible terms. It seems rather that the two former are to be taken in a *general*, and the two latter in a more *particular* sense.*

In
* I cannot help remarking a mistake, into which *Hemsius* appears to have fallen as to these words. In his *Expositiones Sacrae* (p. 77.) he says, "Nec de stran-

"gulatione

In the verses, therefore, quoted from *Albenaus*, ἀποπνίσκου may be proper, but ἀπασχόμου not so. Indeed were ἀπασχόμου to be admitted, still there are such circumstances introduced, as necessarily lead to the *metaphorical* sense of the word. And I am apt to think, that in the use of πνίσω and ἀποπνίσω themselves, the *natural* sense is always to be followed, where there are no circumstances which determine them to a *metaphorical* meaning. These words, however, afford no rule with

“gulatione quæ sit laqueo *Dioscoridem* egisse sentio, cum
 “de fungis dixit, ὅτι πνίγμυς ἐντοφρασίῳ, σινολας ΑἴΧ-
 “ΟΝΑΙΣ. E quo loco patet quodque, πνίσμων et ἀσχονν
 “idem esse.”

I must confess, I should be inclined to draw the *contrary* conclusion; that therefore πνίσμων and ἀσχονν are *different* from each other. Else *Dioscorides* would never have used the word σινολας to express more clearly the idea which he wished to convey by πνίγμυς. It seems most likely that he takes πνίγμυς in the *general* sense here alluded to, and ἀσχονν in the particular one. I should therefore be inclined to translate the passage thus: *They cause SUFFOCATIONS, like those suffocations which arise from HANGING.*

B b

respect

respect to the passage in St. Matthew; for the reasons above assigned. In reality, no argument can be drawn from the meaning of either *πνλω* or *αποπνλω* to lead to a decision on so different a word as *απαλχομαι*.

The examples, therefore, adduced by Mr. Wakefield from Lucian,* whatever they may determine as to the meaning of the two former of these words, can have no force with respect to *απαλχομαι* and of consequence have no tendency towards the decision of the point before us. The same may be said of *αρχων*. But even in these, I am convinced that the passages adduced by Mr. Wakefield do not affect the question. For in that which I have quoted from Plutarch, *πνυγελαι* plainly has a metaphorical signification, *suggested by the very words which accompany it*; and in Lucian's Timon,† *αρχων* is to be rendered *quasi*

* Comment on Matt. xxvii. 5, p. 387.

† Edit. Kent. p. 143. I cannot help requesting Mr. Wakefield to be more *accurate* in his references, as from a want of this, I found great difficulty in getting at the very passages which he has quoted as authorities.

suspendium;

suspendium; Ἀσχοντες αὐ το πρᾶγμα τενοντο αὐτοῖς.
 For this would be a very HANGING to them.
 Accordingly the passage is very properly
 translated (by Kent, I suppose) *Hæc enim reo*
ad RESTIM illos adiget.

In the *Cataplus* of Lucian (vol. I. p. 437,
 edit. Benedict.) πνίσει is proper, but perhaps
 ἀσχει world be hardly so. The same may be
 said of ἀποπνίγει in *De Mercede Conductæ*, p. 498.
 But in both these places the metaphorical
 meaning of these words, and of consequence,
 their inapplicableness to the *absolute* phrase
 of St. Matthew, is manifestly determined by
 the connexion in which they are used.

In Mark v. 15. ἐπνίγοντο is used in its pro-
 per and natural sense. But can this afford
 any proof that ἀγχω or ἀπαγχω must be synony-
 mous to it? or if it were, do not the words
 ἐν τῇ θαλάσῃ show the *cause* of their *suffocation*?
 Is this the case in the passage of St. Mat-
 thew? Ought not then the obvious and
 common interpretation to be followed?

Though, “ the Greeks, to express sui-
 “ cide, commonly employed the phrases,

“*βροχον αΐαι*, or *αΐασθαι*, *αυλοχευρ*, *αυλοφονευειν**, and the like,”* did they therefore employ none to express the *particular* kind of suicide in question? Is not *απαλχουσαι* plainly one of these? *Αυλοχευρ*, *αυλοφονευειν**, are *general* terms; *πνίω* is *less* general; *βροχον αΐαι* or *αΐασθαι*, though used even by two lexicographers, may perhaps be poetical terms,† *Αλχω* and *απαλχω* seem to be the *original* and *plain* expressions.

Mr. Wakefield has given the world his remarks on the verse in question, no doubt, from a laudable wish to reconcile two sacred historians. My ideas on this subject may be seen in the foregoing letters, and therefore need not be repeated here.

I cannot, however, on this circumstance, avoid proposing to him this question; which, I think, it concerns all critics on the sacred writers impartially to consider.

* Wakef. on Matt. p. 387. Col. ii. sub fin.

† Vid. Homer. Odyss. λ. v. 277. and the passage above quoted from Apollonius.

Is it a proper method, in order to determine the meaning of a disputed expression, that arguments should be drawn from consistencies or inconsistencies in narrations of facts? Two historians, for instance, appear to differ in the relation of an event: the question is, do their accounts contradict each other?

To *assume* a particular meaning of a phrase used by one of them, in order to make his account agree with that of the other historian, is *taking their agreement for granted*; which is the matter to be *proved*, not *assumed*.

In all cases, the known and common acceptance of words in good authors, is the best method of determining such difficulties. If this method be followed in the question before us, the dispute, as I should think, will be at once settled. At least, this is the method which I have endeavoured to pursue.

Recommending, therefore, these remarks to Mr. Wakefield's consideration, I beg leave to conclude, with assuring him, and my readers, that I have made them public
under

under the full impression of the following observations of one of the most elegant and sensible authors of all antiquity.

“ Est omnis cognitio multis obstructa difficultatibus; eaque est, et in ipsis rebus obscuritas, et in judiciis nostris infirmitas, ut, non sine causa, antiquissimi et doctissimi invenire se posse, quod cuperent, diffisi sint.— Hoc liberiores et solutiores sumus, quod *integra nobis est judicandi potestas*; nec, ut omnia quæ præscripta et quasi imperata sint, defendamus, necessitate ulla cogimur.” Cic. Acad.

From which I would wish to draw, and recommend, this conclusion: “ nos qui sequimur probabilia, nec ultra quam id quod verisimile occurrit, progredi possumus— et *refellere sine pertinacia, et refelli, sine iracundia*, parati sumus.” Tusc. Disp.

THE END.



ADVERTISEMENT.

THE author of the preceding letters has had by him for a considerable time, a course of remarks on the Three Greek Tragedians, which he is desirous to lay before the public. No good edition has yet appeared either of Sophocles, Euripides, or Æschylus. Could the author be furnished with proper assistance, he hopes that he could present the world with a correct and useful edition of each of these poets. The text he would collate with the best Mss. and the notes he would collect, with care and impartiality from all those, who have in any respect, contributed their illustrations. The Greek Scholia he would preserve complete. To these he would add his own observations and conjectures.

He has already completed, on this plan, a set of notes on the Agamemnon of Æschylus, but, for want of proper encouragement, has not ventured to publish them.

As the work must necessarily be the result of considerable labour, and be accompanied with great expense, it cannot be supposed that he should engage in it, without a prospect of being under no hazard of losing by it.

Should any of the friends of classical learning be inclined to give encouragement to this undertaking; applications by letter (post paid) to the Rev. John Pope, at Hackney College, will be properly attended to, and duly answered.

ERRATA.

Page 12, line 15, read *Previously*. P. 165, l. 2, for is entitled to r. *deserves*. P. 172, l. 3, f. *those* r. *these*; *ibid.* f. *affected* r. *supposed to be established*. P. 195, l. 22, r. *and is supposed*. P. 196, l. ult. f. *præfert* r. *præfertim*. P. 203, l. 10, f. *are* r. *are meant to be*. P. 210, l. 7 from the bottom, dele *For*. P. 212, l. 8, for *those* r. *these*. P. 214, l. 5, r. *Griesbach*. P. 223, l. 11, dele *fairly*. P. 225, l. 5 from the bottom r. *poenitentes*. P. 232, l. 9, r. *propaganda*. P. 235, l. 6, r. *in the short story*. P. 236, l. 10, r. *these*. P. 238, l. 5, r. *grunium*. P. 263, l. 4 from the bottom, dele comma after *martyrium*. P. 264, l. 7 from the bottom, f. *period* r. *comma*. P. 265, l. 14, r. *in persecutions*. P. 281, l. 3 from the bottom, f. *nunc* r. *nunc*. P. 283, l. 8 from the bottom, r. *sagacissimi*. P. 296, l. 8, r. *they*. P. 308, l. 6 from the bottom, f. *we* r. *they*. P. 309, l. 6 from the bottom, f. *Art.* r. *Ant*; l. 3, from the bottom, f. *and* r. *with*. P. 316, l. 5, f. *habitation* r. *habitation*. P. 319, l. 11, f. *destory* r. *destroy*; l. ult. f. *merentur* r. *merentur*. P. 334, l. 6 from the bottom, f. *Diagnet* r. *Diagnet*; l. 4 from the bottom, f. *Just. Rom.* r. *Fortin's Remarks*. P. 352, l. 4, f. *the* r. *these*.